



**DELHI UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY**

DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Cl. No. V3:1: N3 E13

Ac. No. 90532

Date of release for loan  
4 MAR 1957

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below.

An overdue charge of one anna will be charged for each day the book is kept overdue.

---



**A MODERN HISTORY OF THE  
ENGLISH PEOPLE**





A MODERN HISTORY OF  
THE ENGLISH PEOPLE  
1910-1922

By  
R. H. GRETTON

LONDON  
MARTIN SECKER  
NUMBER FIVE JOHN STREET  
ADELPHI

Printed in Great Britain  
by The Riverside Press Limited  
Edinburgh

LONDON: MARTIN SECKER (LTD.) 1929

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. 1910 : CONCLUSIONS WITH THE HOUSE OF LORDS . . . . .	9
II. 1911 : POLITICS PAST THE OBSTRUCTION .	28
III. 1912 : STAMP-LICKING, WINDOW-SMASHING, AND ULSTER-COVENANTING . . . . .	59
IV. 1913—JULY 1914 : THE SLIPPERY SLOPE .	88
V. THE WAR YEARS : PART I. . . . .	139
VI. THE WAR YEARS : PART II. . . . .	188
VII. THE WAR YEARS : PART III. . . . .	223
VIII. THE WAR YEARS : PART IV. . . . .	270
IX. 1919 : DEMOBILISED . . . . .	313
X. 1920-1922 : THE PAINFUL TRUTH . . . . .	356
INDEX . . . . .	369



## CHAPTER I

### 1910 : CONCLUSIONS WITH THE HOUSE OF LORDS

THE death of King Edward cannot, of course, be represented as a turning-point in the national life of his country. It neither opened the way to fresh currents nor diverted the course of those that were already in motion. A new world, both socially and politically unrecognisable by the great Victorians, had been coming into being before his accession, and had shown its characteristics strongly enough while he yet reigned. Moreover, in the last four years of his life domestic politics, culminating in the People's Budget, and foreign politics, restless and uneasy since the Boer War, had already disturbed men's minds with the sense that the foundations, as well as the surface, of a long-familiar world were moving. The Liberal-Labour triumph of 1906 had lived up to a good deal of what had been expected of it. On the other hand there can be no reason to suppose that, if King Edward had lived longer, the course of events would have been other than it was. His death made no serious difference to the arrayed political forces.

Yet, though no turning-point, the date of his death does seem to associate itself with an uncomfortable change in the country's state of mind. From such beginnings as serious strikes unauthorised by the Trade Union leaders, the early demonstrations of the new movement for Women's Suffrage, and the platform extravagances of the 1909 Budget campaign, it grew until a temper of sheer fighting seemed to invade every

aspect of affairs, working up to the verge of actual civil war in the summer of 1914. It would not be fanciful to see this in more than politics. In art (though here the attack upon old conventions always has some intolerance) the new methods of painting, the new conceptions of music, the new exploitations of the stage, were all more or less lurid; violence of expression was an essential part of them. In social life the old steady penetration of the world of fashion by a world of wealth, glad to maintain the old barriers once it was inside them, gave way to a feverish, contemptuous construction of a new world of fashionable idleness, only too well attuned to a world of lurid art. Industry took on more and more the aspect of two massed opposing forces, between which compromise became ever more precarious. The four years between King Edward's death and the outbreak of war may well be labelled with a word that a single movement of the period appropriated to itself: they were militant years.

The immediate sequel to his death, however, was a brief lull in the fight for which, this year, the political stage had been set—the fight between the Government majority and the House of Lords. The struggle was, of course, an old one; almost it might be called hallowed in Liberal annals as a Gladstonian tradition. Gladstone had discharged the first shots in 1861, and come to much closer range with his Home Rule Bills. The years of revived Liberalism since 1906 preserved the tradition of those encounters. The general feeling in the party that its career could not but be punctuated by trials of strength between the two Houses was worked upon by the determination of a considerable section not to stop short of a trial of conclusions; they would be betraying their opportunity if they now failed to clear the way for Liberalism of the future. The most had therefore been made of every rejection of a Bill by

the Lords ; and as these had naturally been the Bills of most controversial Liberal complexion—a Plural Voting Bill, a Scottish Land Bill, an Education Bill, a Licensing Bill—the temper of the party in the House had needed no other sharpening. But their leaders were far too clever to think that the mood of the party in the House was enough for such a battle. They did not fail to observe those factors in the country at large which must encourage Conservatism and the Lords. There was, first, the “chilling off” of the electorate from its mood of 1905, its distinctly nervous reconsideration of what its enthusiastic backing of Free Trade might have committed it to ; it had been discovering, rather naïvely, that the alternative to Conservative Governments with which it had grown impatient could only be a Liberalism which had moved a long way forward since 1895, and fully intended to register its advance in drastic social legislation. Secondly, the Free Trade issue having largely died away (for no one, after the election of December 1905, could imagine that the country would stand a Protection campaign), an electoral struggle would go back to the confused *mêlée* of ordinary party strife, and it would be impossible to present clearly and conclusively the case against the Lords. A third point was that in such an ordinary party struggle the Conservatives would have some distinct strategical advantages ; not only could they point to a large mass of Liberal legislation which had not been interfered with (some two hundred Acts had gone on to the Statute Book since 1906),<sup>1</sup> but they had especially refrained from hampering the legislation which would peculiarly appeal to Labour, such as the Trade Disputes Act, and Old Age Pensions. In the face of such facts as these, could Liberals pin much hope to a struggle on a constitutional

<sup>1</sup> See a speech by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords, 25th November 1910.



question too dry to rouse enthusiasm except among the stalwarts, based mainly upon a rejection of traditional Liberal principles of no sharp social interest, and very apt to degenerate into rambling calculations and counter-calculations of the actual loss and gain of Bills?

Hence the remarkable skill—not fully perceived at the time by the Conservative leaders—of the Budget of 1909 as a party manœuvre. The fight with the House of Lords must be pegged to a single issue, of strong appeal to Labour, and startling. If that House could be lured, by rejecting a Budget, into an assertion of their ultimate power, not merely in ordinary matters of legislation, but in a sphere in which for two hundred years they had admitted a tradition of non-interference, the flagrantly obstinate nature of their party spirit would be displayed. If the Budget could be given a markedly social colour, that obstinacy could be made to appear an entrenched class obstinacy of a kind to rouse even the least politically minded voter to some feeling on a constitutional matter. The taxation of what seemed a peculiarly idle form of capitalistic profit-taking—the increment on land values—for the purpose of establishing new social services, without draining the means for national defence, was a perfect electoral formula.

So the struggle for the Budget of 1909 had been entered upon as in itself the final struggle with the House of Lords.<sup>1</sup> In that spirit the new Commons, after the Budget election of January 1910, had met, and in that spirit the passing of the delayed Budget had been followed by Mr Asquith's introduction in April 1910 of Resolutions preliminary to a Bill, the *Parliament Bill*, regulating the relations between the two Houses. If there had remained any doubt as to

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., pp. 320-324 and 381.

the reality of the constitutional issue, or any feeling that, with their Budget secure, Liberals, relying on the socialistic glory of that achievement, might think the final stages of the great issue not worth while, Mr Asquith's speech swept it away. For he used phrases which could only mean that, in the event of the House of Lords refusing to accept the result of the recent election as authorising a curtailment of their power, the Government contemplated overbearing opposition by a creation of peers sufficient for the purpose. That, at any rate, was the amplification which was immediately given to his words. What he had actually said was that, in the event of the issue being further forced, Ministers would not advise a Dissolution except on such conditions as would enable them, if successful at the polls, to place the Parliament Bill upon the Statute Book, despite the resistance of the House of Lords. But the use of such words inevitably sent minds back to the last occasion on which a vital constitutional battle had had to be carried through more than one election and the overbearing of opposition had been similarly threatened—the Reform Bill of 1832. As the “conditions” then for securing the passage of the Bill had been the Royal authority for a sufficient creation of peers, it could only be assumed that this was in Mr Asquith's mind.

The speech let loose floods of speculation. It revealed the fact that, whatever the rank and file might think of the results of the election, the leaders knew that the House of Lords was far from accepting it as final. The gigantic Liberal majority had gone; there was no more than a good working majority of Liberals and Labour combined, not impossibly beyond the reach of the revived Conservative Opposition. Of more general interest was the incredulous questioning whether it could seriously be proposed to overbear opposition in a House of Lords so much larger than it had been in

1832, and so much more unevenly divided ; Lord Grey could then have achieved his purpose with a score or two of new creations, but a Liberal Premier now would require several hundreds. Supporters of the Government asked themselves whether so sweeping an action were possible ; its opponents asked whether such an unseemliness were conceivable. Promptly, too, unseemliness was charged upon Mr Asquith from another angle—the impropriety of introducing into the controversy, at the first production of his proposals, so broad a hint of the Royal Prerogative. But Mr Asquith was to show how skilful and resolute he could be. Amid all the clamour of speculation and of dignified surprise and rebuke, concealing a secret hope of trapping him into some more specific and vulnerable statement, he maintained his cautious formula unimpaired until the right moment came for plain words, sure that his supporters would deduce enough to give them confidence, and determined that his opponents should have nothing more definite to exploit.

It was immediately obvious that his words had not been a piece of uncalled-for emphasis. The Parliament Bill was going to be fought. But before the forces had deployed, King Edward's death made an interruption which, though brief, was enough to lead to a suspension of hostilities. There was a large body of sober opinion on both sides which felt that a fight to a finish would be, at the least, a pity ; and throughout the preliminary skirmishes Conservative voices enough had been heard admitting that the existing House of Lords needed reform. Was there not then possibility of compromise ? Men gossiped of what might well have happened if the King had lived, and again called the leaders to conference. There was at any rate this ground for such speculation, that King Edward was fairly well known to have used what influence he could, within his marked

discretion, to prevent the precipitation, by the rejection of the Budget, of a struggle which he deplored as bad politics.<sup>1</sup> There was no great surprise, then, but a considerable sense of relief, when, upon the resumption of political life, it was announced that a conference was to meet, composed of Mr Asquith, Lord Crewe, Mr Lloyd George and Mr Birrell on the one side, and Mr Balfour, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Cawdor and Mr Austen Chamberlain on the other. It entered upon its meetings in June.

Deprived for the time being of the spectacular in politics, of which it had lately had a good deal, the public mind was ready for a return to what was becoming a principal interest of summer months—the progress of aviation. It had not yet reached beyond the stage of a fair-weather enterprise. The event of the year was an aviation meeting at Bournemouth, on the lines of the successful one held at Blackpool in the previous year; flying was still in the main a performance round and round a course. The meeting was marred by the death of the Honourable C. S. Rolls, of the famous Rolls Royce car firm, who had taken to flying; he crashed in the sea. Oversea flying was considered a daring feat; a fourth crossing of the Channel, this time by a Mr Moisant, an American, and a flight by Robert Loraine to Ireland in September were admiringly chronicled, as were also the facts that Loraine had flown on one occasion in a storm, and that another aviator had attained a speed in the air of some 75-95 miles an hour. Airships too were still considered to be in competition, as it were, with aeroplanes for the future of flying; Mr Willows flew a small dirigible from Cardiff to London, and later flew it round St Paul's, by way of demonstrating its possibilities as a "one-man" rival to the plane.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., p. 383.

But even the new thrill of flying had to give place, in July, to a wildly excited absorption in a murder case, in which the usual gruesome "mystery" of the discovery of a woman's body buried in a London house, shortly after the unexplained absence from his usual business of her husband, was heightened to an extraordinary pitch by a first, and very theatrical, intrusion of "wireless" into such affairs. This was the notorious Crippen case. For ten days the story had pursued an ordinary course in the newspapers, with the details of the finding of the body, of the missing man's life and ways (he was an American who had been running a patent-medicine business), and of his disappearance from London in the company, it was said, of a young woman. Clues which pointed to her having gone with him in boy's clothes, and other clues which led detectives over to foreign ports, had kept public interest at the too familiar level, when suddenly, on 25th July, *The Daily Telegraph* published the amazing news that the captain of a steamer on the way to Canada had sent a wireless message stating that he believed himself to have the missing couple on board. This, then, was the explanation of the hurried departure, for Canada, on 22nd July, of the Scotland Yard inspector in charge of the case. Not one savour of this incredibly dramatic turn of events was lost. Instead of the meagre fare of carefully doled-out clues, and the more or less blind interest in the case, here was the whole nation behind the scenes, watching (this was the thrill of the piece) those two fugitives in mid-ocean, and they, to whom alone it was life and death, alone unaware that they were already discovered. It seems almost impossible that they should not have felt the glare of the thousand million eyes following their tiny figures all unconscious of the racing detective who, on a faster steamer, would land ahead of them. Never had the public so watched

the closing-in of doom. That stage of the case ended a week later, when Inspector Dew, boarding the fugitives' ship on its arrival, confirmed the captain's identification, and made his arrests. But this fantastic keying-up of the excitements of a murder case prolonged itself into whole-page reports of the trial, when it came on in October; Crippen was condemned to death, and his companion acquitted.<sup>1</sup> Another crime of the year should have passing mention, because it was remarked upon as the first "scientific burglary"; in September a strong-room door in some business premises in Birmingham had been cut through with an oxy-acetylene blow-lamp, and the burglars, interrupted at their work, had escaped to London in a motor-car.

Of more importance in this connection are the prison reforms initiated by Mr Winston Churchill, at this time Home Secretary. Not the least interesting point about them is that they are an authentic instance of the moral influence often claimed for stage plays, but seldom so acknowledged; Mr Churchill, giving honour where honour was due, acknowledged the help which had been rendered by Mr Galsworthy's play *Justice* in bringing the public mind, always rather callous about convicted offenders, to the point of accepting new and kinder ideas. Indeed, the theme of the play was clearly traceable in some of the reforms—the reduction of solitary confinement, the abolition of the "ticket of leave," and the provision, tentative as yet, of lectures and concerts in prisons. There were other reforms affecting young offenders, and the Borstal system received an extension by the opening of a new institution on those lines at Feltham.

*Justice* was one theatrical event of the year. Another, Sir Herbert Tree's production of *Henry VIII.*, may be

<sup>1</sup> She was defended by a young barrister already becoming famous, Mr F. E. Smith, now Lord Birkenhead.

allowed to emerge for this reason, that, with an amusing truculence, he was countering what he called "the affected simplicity of art nouveau," which had been clamouring for less scene-painting and more of the art of acting, with a more showy and expensive production than ever. He had his success, too; for the play-going world was not in serious mood. Pelissier's "Follies," with their "potted plays," were at the height of their fame; and dancing drew larger audiences than any plays, whether the appeal was that of the sensuous "self-expression" and rhythm-interpretation of Maud Allan's *Salome* (many were copying her in drawing-rooms, and Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson even took to the stage in the autumn), or that of the perfect mass movement and strong colour and sound of the Russian ballet, which had become so popular that this year Mordkin and Pavlova left the ballet, on its departure for Russia, and stayed in London. Perhaps the powerful exhilaration of the Russian dance-rhythms had something to do with a tendency to what older generations regarded as almost riotous dancing in the season's ballrooms; though modern generations must wonder how any dancing at all, let alone vigorous dancing, was possible in the long tight "hobble skirts," which, with enormous hats, made just then the fashionable outline. They were such close sheaths that even walking was barely possible.

People drifted back from holidays spoiled by a soaking August to their normal occupations. The House of Lords question had disappeared behind the closed doors of the Conference; and those of the general public who still thought of it were not apprehensive. There might, after all, be no grave break with tradition. Strangely, the deaths of some notable people at an advanced age in the late summer and autumn turned the mind backward, in an unusual degree, to traditions. Lord Spencer, "the Red Earl," who died in August,

had been Mr Gladstone's staunch man in the now threatened House. Florence Nightingale, who died in the same month, and Holman Hunt, who died in September, stood for traditions that seemed even dimmer. On the other hand, Mr Frank Podmore, the spiritualist, who had been found drowned in a pool on the Malvern Hills, and Professor William James, the American philosopher, had in their different ways a considerable hold upon modern minds uneasily seeking for their comfort new spiritual assurances and new formulæ for the religious instinct. And it was pre-eminently its own baffling contradictions which the modern world saw reflected in the news, in November, of the last tragic stage of Tolstoy's mortal journey. The chafing of long years against the inconsistencies of the life he had to live as a Russian landowner with the creed of simplicity he preached so passionately in his books had torn him at last from his family ties, and driven him, with what should have been something of the dreadfulness of Lear, into the world alone and penniless. But the feebleness of his great age dwarfed, in the publicity of newspaper columns, a noble gesture to a pitiful petulance. Too weak of body to shake off the family attentions he longed to repudiate, he died in the waiting-room of a railway station not far from his home.

With the constitutional truce in being, politicians had at least two other questions to occupy them: Women's Suffrage, and the position that had been created in the trade union world by the Osborne judgment. The suffrage movement also had been in something like a state of truce since the introduction in May of what was called a "Conciliation Bill"; the name sufficiently indicates the hopes that were entertained of it. But the suffragists, who had managed to maintain a rather mistrustful patience, had now to see



politicians again deciding that another question had prior claim upon them. This was no time to chill Labour supporters by leaving "in the air" the situation created by the Osborne case. Hardly had trade union funds been protected by the legislation evoked by the Taff Vale case<sup>1</sup> when this fresh difficulty had arisen. Mr W. V. Osborne, a railway employee, had brought an action against the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants seeking to restrain, as *ultra vires*, the expenditure of union subscriptions for political purposes. Now the considerable growth of Labour representation in the House of Commons had been made possible only by the levy on trade union funds; and when this case, fought up to the House of Lords, was finally decided, in December 1909, in Mr Osborne's favour, Labour felt that, as in the Taff Vale case, vagueness of earlier legislation, due to the equivocal position of the unions, was being most unfairly clarified. Trade unionists might well be impatient with a world which professed to urge upon them political activity as better than the strike, and then forbade them to use their funds for political purposes. Nor is it any wonder that Mr Osborne's motives were misrepresented. But his own explanation for his action had dignity. He was a Liberal, with a strong family tradition of Liberalism; and his dislike of the assumption, inherent in the political levy, that trade unionists could have no independence in politics, was honest, if unfortunately fanatical.<sup>2</sup>

The case produced no such clear reaction as had followed the Taff Vale case. On the whole there had, in the latter, been little doubt, except among extremists, that the new interpretation of the law had been contrary to the intentions of the legislators; and an amending Act had been the one remedy envisaged. The Osborne

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., pp. 118-119, 262.

<sup>2</sup> See an interview with him in *The Daily News*, 7th October 1910.

case was in several respects less simple. The final decision had been based on the view that, as the Act of 1876, intending to recognise trade union activities (and for that reason always regarded as a great step forward for the unions), had included specific statements of those activities, nothing outside those statements could be a legitimate object of expenditure. However hard it might be to be tied down to the definitions of an Act passed long before their modern political activities had developed, even trade union leaders could hardly maintain that this judgment was, like the other, a manifest distortion of the original intention of the law. Moreover it was obvious that the use of the fund for the support of a single political party involved denying individual liberty of view; and no progressive party could easily commit itself to overriding the courts of law, the traditional refuge of that liberty, by an Act simply, in effect, reversing their decision. Labour, then, no less than public opinion in general, looked at first in other directions for a solution. Naturally there were those who maintained that political funds should be voluntary contributions; but this, while manageable in the classes which could give in pounds and hundreds of pounds, would lay an impossible burden of toil upon a party which could collect only by pennies and shillings. Quite a different line of adjustment took prominence in the summer. Long before modern trade unions had built themselves up, Labour's own idea of its way into Parliament had been the payment of members—one of the points, in fact, of the People's Charter. Would it not now meet the difficulty? It hardly could, satisfactorily; there would remain election expenses and, still more, the constant running expense of political work in the constituencies. But it had its place in Labour speeches, as well as in those of Liberals and of Conservatives of such different

generations as Sir John Gorst and Mr F. E. Smith; and the new prominence thus given to the subject helped to bring about the institution of payment of members in the following year. However, as 1910 drew on, there was less and less prospect of avoiding direct legislation in the matter. The trade unions hardened at their Congress in September, though still only after much debate, to a demand for "reversal" of the judgment; various Ministers began to announce in speeches that the matter was under consideration by the Cabinet; and in November Mr Asquith definitely committed the Government to the production of a Bill.

At the same time Labour had to listen to a good deal of lecturing from Liberals. There was an uneasy strike spirit in the air; and it was unfortunate that, just when the leaders of Labour had a case to state, so much should happen to discredit their hold upon the unions. A shipbuilding lock-out in September, a much more extensive cotton lock-out in October—both arising out of dismissals of individual workmen—and a strike in the South Wales coal-field which provoked serious rioting at Tonypany in November, had all displayed impatience with union leadership, and had an "anarchic" look.

Revolution was in the news in October. On the 5th came accounts of a *coup d'état* in Lisbon and the proclamation of a Republic. For some days the information was chaotic; no one knew what had happened to the young king, though he was believed to have escaped, and the full extent of the disaffection was not known. But in a few days, as the situation cleared in Lisbon itself, the newspaper correspondents were allowed to send off their messages; and it became evident that the assassination in 1908 of King Carlos and the Crown Prince, regarded at the time as an isolated act of violence, had set light to much smouldering disloyalty to the dynasty—so much that by the time King Manoel

arrived in England (he had been got to safety on a British warship) there was but little idea that he would ever regain his throne.

As the time approached for the reassembling of Parliament, eyes were turned again in the direction of the Conference. The Government majority was none too easy in its mind, for the very aspects of the business which tended to keep the ordinary man from too much apprehension spelled misgiving for the convinced party men in the House. It had been openly said during the summer that the Ministry had been less determined, at the beginning of the session, than the rank and file; and the Liberal Press seemed to be betraying a little anxiety in its insistence from time to time that "the nation intended to be master in its own house." There was no disguise of its anxiety when, in the autumn, articles in the Press of the other side, notably a series signed "Pacificus" in *The Times*, opened up, under the guise of conciliatory suggestions, a vista of compromise on all sorts of subjects which was positively alarming. Nor did the Conference find many more friends among the Unionists, who were on the whole inclined to feel that any reform schemes or any invention of systematic machinery of co-operation between the Houses would come too near surrendering a battle which was by no means lost. On both sides, therefore, there was more relief than disappointment when the announcement was made on 11th November that the Conference had broken up without reaching any agreement. Nothing was said of the causes of its failure; but rumour justified the mistrust of Liberals and Labour. Just before the break-up it had been said that a deadlock had been reached over the question whether on "constitutional measures" the House of Lords should retain its full powers; the ominous aspect of this was that "constitutional measures" must include much of

what was vital to a Liberal programme. And a few days after the break-up *The Daily Mail* stated that a "secret caucus" of peers had forced Mr Balfour to bring the Conference to an end and to "let the constituencies decide"; which meant that only a disastrous degree of compromise would have kept the peers from gambling on the Government's either shrinking from the drastic proposals of Mr Asquith's Resolutions or failing to carry the constituencies at another election. It was, then, with a sense that the air was clearing that on 15th November Parliament met.

There had been some changes in the Ministry. Sir Rufus Isaacs had become Attorney-General, and this left room to strengthen the debating power of the Treasury Bench by making Sir John Simon Solicitor-General. Lord Morley, feeling the work of a Department too much for him now, became Lord President of the Council, Lord Crewe took the India Office, Mr Lewis Harcourt the Colonial Office, and Lord Beauchamp the First Commissionership of Works.

Battle was joined at once. Lord Lansdowne asked for the Government Bill, and Lord Crewe introduced it with the plain intimation that "there could be no settlement by agreement now." The terms of the Bill were that, pending a reform of the composition of the House of Lords, any measure which passed the Commons in three successive sessions unchanged might be presented for the Royal Assent without the consent of the Lords; and that any finance measure might receive the Assent in the same way if, at the end of a month, the Lords' consent was withheld. It was an uncompromising demand for surrender, and there was really no need to await formal refusal by the Lords. This did not come until 21st November, when Lord Lansdowne carried the adjournment of the Second Reading, in favour of a debate on his own Resolutions for the reform

of the House. But already, on the 18th, the announcement of the dissolution of Parliament had been made. Mr Asquith had repeated, in making it, the formula he had used in April about the conditions upon which the Ministry would take this course; and the significance which had all along been attached to his words now clothed them to the full, for just before Parliament met he had been to see the King at Sandringham, and just after it met the King had come to London and received Lord Crewe, Mr Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, leaving London immediately afterwards, almost as if to heighten, by its isolation, the meaning of his action.

As it happened, the announcement of the dissolution and of a second General Election within twelve months occupied the next day's papers less than what had happened in and around the precincts of the House at the very moment when the announcement was being made inside it. This was another of the big and deliberately violent Women's Suffrage demonstrations at Westminster; and it was followed a few days later by a yet bigger one, in the course of which 153 women were arrested. Nothing, after all, had occurred to diminish the exasperation of the new movement. The old impasse remained between politicians unable to see how anything could be allowed to interfere with a programme of Liberal legislation which had already had to wait so long, and women who would only see how long their own cause had waited; between a Government unable to see why a point-blank division of opinion in the Cabinet should not produce in this matter the suspension of action which it would produce in any other, and women asserting a plain right beyond the rules of normal political behaviour. The Conciliation Bill had, as it turned out, hindered rather than helped peace. Carefully framed to avoid too large a feminine intrusion into the electorate, it laid itself open to the

charge of being undemocratic and, as such, a Bill for which even convinced suffragists in the Government could not press for facilities; Mr Lloyd George had been taking this line, and was specially singled out for the accusations of quibbling and dishonesty which it not unnaturally aroused among the suffragists. Faced now by another General Election, in which, so far as Liberals and Labour could help it, no other subject than the "Lords' veto" was to be raised—their Press had openly deplored the danger of the suffrage question distracting the electorate—it was no wonder that the suffrage movement expressed itself once more in calculated disorder.

Parliament was dissolved on 28th November; by 5th December the first election returns were coming in. No one had wanted a long campaign; the shorter and sharper it was, the better. The new House, complete by 21st December, consisted of 272 Liberals, 42 Labour members, 76 Irish Nationalists, and 8 Irish Independents on the Government side; on the Opposition side 253 Unionists and 19 Irish Unionists. The Opposition Press might analyse the figures, and prove that, without the Irish and Labour, whose vote on the House of Lords could not be called disinterested, the Government had only a majority of 18.<sup>1</sup> But even so the constituencies had decided; and the plain fact was that the Government could rely upon its whole majority of 126.

At the very end of the year there came a reminder that uneasiness in our foreign relations was lurking all the time behind these months of absorption in a domestic struggle. Articles that had been published in France by M. Deschanel on the "Triple Entente" of Great Britain, France and Russia had provoked comment in Germany. For the time being a minimising in the

<sup>1</sup> One Liberal member had been returned from Ireland.

British Press of M. Deschanel's rather too candid interpretation of the obligations of the Entente smoothed the surface of affairs, even to the extent of suggesting that there really existed no obligations that need prevent an Anglo-German Entente. But in fact, in so far as our relations with Germany had been in the public mind at all, there was little sign of real friendliness. Newspapers which one day were deploring jealous rivalries would on another congratulate the nation on the skill with which the secret of our new 13·5 naval gun had been kept; and the publication of Mr Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion*, with its thesis that war among great modern communities was financially unthinkable, seemed only another indication of how near they were coming to thinking about it. If for the moment party exchanges in the Commons on the subject of our naval rivalry with Germany had become less acute (though Mr Balfour had been accused of "scare-mongering"), there was matter for concern outside Parliament in the unfriendly irritability which was beginning to express itself in spy-scares. Two Englishmen had been condemned in Germany on a charge of espionage; and *Punch* was giving rein to contemptuous pleasantries about the surreptitious activities of the German waiters in British hotels and restaurants.



## CHAPTER II

### 1911 : POLITICS PAST THE OBSTRUCTION

THE new year was ushered in by an occurrence which gave startling emphasis to the feeling that the general amiability, on the whole, of the social structure, to which the later generations of Victorians had grown thoroughly accustomed, was disintegrating. Throughout the morning of 3rd January bullets were whistling up and down a street in the East End of London, grimly empty save for a few policemen at posts of vantage in sheltered entries, and a line of Scots Guards, prone in the roadway, sniping at the windows of one of the houses. It was the notorious "battle of Sidney Street," and it even reached a point at which Horse Artillery, though in the end they never came into action, were bringing up guns. A fortnight earlier a gang of men, interrupted in a burglary in Houndsditch, had fired on the police, killing three of them. Two men believed to be of the gang, whose names, "Fritz" and "Peter the Painter," were now to be on everyone's tongue, had been traced to a house in Sidney Street. The police quietly cleared other people out of the house in the small hours of 3rd January, occupied a brewery building overlooking it, and at 7 A.M. attempted to make their arrests. But they had failed to catch their men napping. Shooting began, and rather than waste lives, which would certainly have been lost by tackling the two at close quarters, the police withdrew from the house, and besieged it in form, sending for a half-company of Scots Guards

from the Tower of London. About midday the Home Secretary, Mr Winston Churchill, arrived on the scene, and soon afterwards the guns were sent for. But just before half-past one the house was seen to be on fire, and that was the end. When an entry could be made, two bodies were found, and, though the inquest failed to establish anything clearly, it appeared most likely that the men had at the last shot themselves; but whether they, or the firing from outside, had set light to the house was never known.

Coming, as it did, while the Tottenham affair, in which also foreigners had used firearms murderously,<sup>1</sup> was still fresh in the memory, the battle of Sidney Street was instantly followed by an outcry against undesirable aliens, swelled by disgust at a coincident affair. A Frenchman had been found murdered on Clapham Common, with the letter S slashed into both his cheeks, and another foreigner, Stinie Morrison, was soon under arrest. For the next three months the two cases ran a curious course in the newspapers. Morrison, protesting his innocence, and able in fact to produce some evidence of an alibi, was condemned to death. But meanwhile the case against certain persons arrested in connection with the Sidney Street affair had been slowly petering out in a maze of unsatisfactory evidence, and dwindled to the sentencing of a woman to two years' imprisonment for conspiracy. Both cases had proceeded through a confusing cloud—clamour about seedy foreigners, irritation with the police for letting London in for a kind of Parisian apache affair, and an uneasy sense that all this was not the atmosphere of fair trial. Morrison, after failing in an appeal against his sentence, was reprieved. The hostility to undesirable aliens remained, and was given a new turn by the articles called forth just at this juncture by

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., p. 317.

the death of Sir Francis Galton, one of the pioneers of eugenics; why should the nation submit to having foreign degenerates added to its own? The Government introduced during the session a Bill meeting the complaint that magistrates were using inadequately their powers of expulsion of aliens, by giving the Home Office power to issue expulsion orders.

There were some less justifiable political reverberations. Mr Churchill's presence in Sidney Street was sharply criticized; and, though he could afford to ignore taunts suggesting that his motives had been merely theatrical, and could disprove more serious accusations of interfering with the police and giving orders over their heads, the attacks on him had significance as indicating the pitch of party temper. They had a kind of parallel later in a campaign of virulent sneers which pursued him and Mr Lloyd George in the matter of "the Dartmoor shepherd." This individual was an elderly man who, convicted of a small theft and known to have served a number of terms of imprisonment, had been sentenced under the new Prevention of Crimes Act to three years' penal servitude and ten years' police supervision. Mr Churchill, interested in a case which seemed typical of the results of the old rather thoughtless penal administration, and Mr Lloyd George, interested because the man was Welsh, had visited him in prison, and he had been liberated. He proved later to have been too much affected by the old methods to be a very shining example of the new. Attacks on Mr Lloyd George, in connection with the embarrassed circumstances of the Birkbeck Bank, for creating an atmosphere of financial mistrust were perhaps less perverse; though as a matter of fact the Bank's difficulties had begun with a "run" probably traceable to the failure early in the year of the Charing Cross Bank, when depositors had lost £1,750,000. The

taking over of the Yorkshire Penny Bank by a London banking group on the ground that it had "outgrown its constitution" may be mentioned here. Sharpness of party feeling was also to be seen in the extraordinary number of political libel actions which arose out of the two General Elections of 1910; there were no less than thirty before the Courts. The "raging and tearing propaganda" of the Tariff Reform controversy, the growing incursion into by-elections of mushroom "ad hoc" organisations of licensed victuallers and coal-owners,<sup>1</sup> and the uncompromising methods of the new suffragist movement had all helped to exasperate political tempers rasped by the "landslide" of 1906; and electioneering was growing so abusive that Mr Masterman, who had to stand for re-election in July of this year, could be described as having "emerged from a mud-bath."

Yet over the immediate Liberal measure of the moment a distinct difference was observed between the temper in Parliament and general feeling outside. For good or ill the final stages of the controversy with the House of Lords aroused but little interest away from Westminster.

Two of the notable men of the party who had had the longest share in it were not to see its end, Sir Charles Dilke and Sir Henry Fowler. The latter, making his way into politics from municipal affairs, had risen quietly to office in Mr Gladstone's later administrations by gifts of clear thinking and moderate, sensible presentation of a case. Sir Charles Dilke's career, on the other hand, had been one of strong lights and shadows. He had entered the 1868 Parliament as a young man of twenty-five, already with a reputation; a tour round the world had led him to the writing of a book, *Greater Britain*, of which the theme and title, both original, gave

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., p. 307.

him, in a period just becoming consciously Imperialist, a brilliant start, to which a strange, arresting element was added by his open and extreme republicanism. A young man of birth and fortune, deeply impressed with the extent of British sway, yet roundly attacking the Crown as a useless and expensive encumbrance, was not a figure that could be missed. Though he soon dropped republicanism of this kind, he remained to the end a mixture, baffling to younger politicians, of equally convinced Radicalism and Imperialism. Just when his high talents were overriding Mr Gladstone's dislike of his Radicalism the shadow fell. Made co-respondent in a divorce case, in which he asserted his innocence, and the verdict in which did not in fact condemn him, he was tragically unable to clear his name in the public mind. Though he returned soon, undaunted, to Parliament, he was never now to be more than a private member, but a private member of a weight and wisdom almost absurdly out of place away from the Front Benches. Speaking with authority on foreign affairs (no one else, save King Edward, who had early sought his friendship, was so much at home in Paris alike with Royalists and with the statesmen of the Third Republic), and on affairs of the Empire, he had also an unrivalled grasp of the relations of industry and the State, and was a peculiarly trusted ally and adviser of the Labour group. Such a career, with its high-lighted opening, its shattering check, and the dogged picking-up of what was left, made him a curiously enigmatic figure; seldom, in British politics, can such great powers have been so generously used—even, perhaps, so happily—in such comparative obscurity.

The general lack of interest in the Parliament Bill was, no doubt, largely due to the feeling that after the two elections all was really over, bar the shouting. This was not quite true. The Bill, introduced in the Commons

on 21st February, and passed by them in May, was given a second reading in the Lords only under the threat of "grave amendments." Earlier in the month Lord Lansdowne had produced again his scheme for reform of the House, having preceded this by a proposal to pray the Crown for leave to bring in a Bill limiting the Royal Prerogative—a necessary preliminary if peers of Parliament were in future not to be the same body as the whole peerage, though at the moment it sounded like a truculent counter-move to a possible wholesale creation of peers. For his prospectively reformed House he now attempted to retain power by amendments to the Parliament Bill providing for a Joint Committee of both Houses in matters of disagreement, and reserving for a Referendum Bills "establishing national Parliaments" or "raising issues of great gravity."

But the country did not take all this very seriously. Besides, the Government, anxious both to keep the fight from becoming a bore, and to display the positive ameliorations for which it was to clear the road, were switching attention on to the next stage; after Old Age Pensions, of dealing with the grim insecurities of the worker, the Health and Unemployment Insurance Bill. They had also to meet their undertakings by introducing the Bill to deal with the Osborne Judgment. The latter Bill was not, in the end, carried this year. Labour, meeting the concern for individual liberty by abandoning the signed party pledge, and abolishing, on the inclusion of payment of members in the year's Budget, the Parliamentary party's salaries from trade union funds, disliked the other provisions for individual liberty which the Government had included in their Bill; and rather than risk, on a Committee stage, a parting of forces which might react upon the fortunes of the Insurance Bill, the Trade Union Bill was taken no further than the second reading.

And then in later spring there were yet other distractions. For this was Coronation year; and in May, as a kind of preliminary spectacle, came the ceremony of the formal opening of the Queen Victoria Memorial with the new Mall and the Admiralty Arch. This has its peculiar interest now as the last occasion on which the German Emperor was to show himself to a London crowd. He and the Empress came over; already his wearing of a British Field-Marshal's uniform had an odd look; and what geniality there was for him in the streets was fairly deeply coloured with the comforting assurance of such facts as the commissioning a few months earlier of the first "all-big-gun" battleship in the world, H.M.S. *Neptune*, the laying-down of two improved Dreadnoughts, and the increase of the Naval Estimates for the year by nearly £4,000,000; the crowd might feel that it could afford to be pleasant. Not that there was any lack of a less confident point of view. We might keep ahead in a naval race, but would that avail a nation disunited by heated politics and more and more industrial unrest? The epidemic of strikes was continuing. One had broken out on the North Eastern Railway in February, against the instructions of the union leaders; and there had been more rioting in South Wales. Those who liked to exaggerate the subversiveness of Labour had their opportunity when, early in the year, a paper called *The Liberator* published an article giving currency to rumours that King George, before his marriage to the Queen, had contracted a marriage at Malta, during his service in the navy, with an admiral's daughter. The putting of the author on his trial caused more sensation than the article. Confronted in the conduct of his defence with the constitutional impossibility of calling the King in evidence, the accused man gave up his case and was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. After the sentence,

when no constitutional point could be involved, the Attorney-General read in court, by the King's direction, an explicit denial of the rumours, signed by His Majesty, an incident which sufficiently showed a sense of the prevalence of the rumours, and a determination that no one should be able to say that, though the offence of publication had been dealt with, the point of fact remained obscure behind a constitutional formality.

Summer, coming in early with promise of far better weather than that of 1910, brought the preparations for the Coronation. It had not the excitement of King Edward's coronation as a spectacle which, owing to Queen Victoria's long reign, few living people had seen. The newspapers could still, in mid-May, give the best of their space to the death, in a fire on the stage of an Edinburgh music-hall, of "The Great Lafayette," an "illusionist" who had curiously caught the popular imagination by the elaborate splendours of the stage *décor* with which he travelled and amid which he perished. But as the great days approached in London, the mere preparations for crowds drew crowds to look at them. Not only were there the vast wooden stands along the route of the procession, but the streets along the route and giving access to it were equipped with gates and rails to help the police in controlling the streams of humanity. For if the Coronation had not the novelty of the last one, modern transport developments would give some novelty in the far larger crowds poured in to see it. For several days before it they drifted about, looking at illuminations of an evening, and at London's attempt to overcome the reproach that it had poorer ideas of decorating itself than any other great city in the world. Pageantry had broken out in the theatres, for the taste for barbaric Orientalism had brought Reinhardt's Arabian Night *Sumurun* to London, and Mr Oscar Asche had followed with the spectacular



displays of *Kismet*. Military camps to house the contingents of show troops sprang up in the parks, as in 1902. The bounding trade returns, constantly trumpeted by the Free Trade Government, were reflected in the ready and luxurious spending which filled hotels and restaurants and theatres. Finally the weather was at its most gracious when on 22nd June the King and Queen were crowned, and on the following day drove through miles of London streets. Nor was this Coronation year to be a mere repetition; it had its own distinctions. The Investiture at Carnarvon in July of the Prince of Wales, whose robed and coroneted boyishness had made such an attractive little figure at the ceremony in the Abbey, was a picturesque invention, and the Imperial air which had blown round the Coronation of King Edward—the first British Sovereign to ascend the throne since the Colonies had become great dominions and India had been added to the titles of the Crown—was to blow more strongly round King George in a visit to India for the Indians to see the King-Emperor taking his power upon him in their own presence in durbar.

The occasion of the Coronation, bringing, as it did, the Colonial Premiers to England, had been used for another Imperial Conference, which was opened in May. It was more important than the public at the time quite understood. Sir Joseph Ward, of New Zealand, produced a motion in favour of an "Imperial Council of State"; its withdrawal two days later did not mask the fact that every other Dominion had repudiated with energy any supreme machine of Empire policy. Here then perished finally all the hazy conceptions, from Disraeli and Tennyson onwards, of some kind of Parliament and Cabinet of Empire, sitting in London and ruling as a political unity the British communities of the world. They perished not only in the failure of Sir Joseph Ward's motion, but also in the strength already

attained by very different conceptions. In March a debate in the Commons on the reciprocity treaty between Canada and the United States—raised by the Opposition in order to charge the Government with driving Canada towards annexation by the States for lack of any preferential tariff with Great Britain—had elicited from Sir Edward Grey the information that, in the course of the negotiations for the treaty, the idea of a Canadian Minister in Washington had emerged. Now at the Conference Sir Edward Grey, criticised for not consulting the Colonies in the negotiations for the Declaration of London, promised consultation about international agreements in future; Mr Fisher, of Australia, was demanding that the Dominions should no longer be represented in the British Government by the Colonial Secretary, but should, as equal Powers, deal with the Foreign Secretary direct; and the Colonial Secretary announced that the Government at any rate proposed, by making two Secretaryships, one for the Dominions and one for the Crown Colonies, to recognise that the old position of subordination no longer applied to the greater colonies. Both this change and the change envisaged by Mr Fisher's proposal had to wait for some years; and when they came they rested on a new conception, tried in the most fiery of furnaces, of what empire might mean. At the moment they were little regarded by a British public which had not been taught even by the Boer War to think about Imperial questions; it was still content with sentiment. But to the interested observer it was clear that a process of evolution, marked at the previous Coronation by the phrase on the new coinage, "all the Britains," had at this Coronation advanced very much further.

For a moment in July interest in the Parliament Bill did flicker up again, when the Royal guarantee to the Prime Minister, so much discussed and discounted that

no one knew now any better than twelve months earlier whether to believe in its existence or not, actually took shape. It was, indeed, by this time something of a damp squib. In the mysterious way in which such impressions get about, the public had put its own value upon the manœuvres and resistances of the extreme Conservatives in both Houses, who at this time added the phrase "diehards" to political nomenclature. Led by the aged Lord Halsbury, they presented the spectacle of a forlorn hope to an age with singularly little use for such things. So side by side with the solemn passing of Lord Lansdowne's amendments there ran the conviction that in the end the Lords must give way. If it was barely credible that there could be a wholesale creation of peers, it was no more credible that the "diehards" would venture to repeat the performance of 1909, when, to throw out the Budget, noble lords had appeared who actually had to ask the policeman at the door the way to their hereditary Chamber; incidents of that farce of the "backwoodsmen" had been only too well exploited on Liberal and Labour platforms. To those behind the scenes the real consideration undermining the "diehard" position was the general indifference of the country. For that meant a conviction that the Budget election had decided that the House of Lords, however it might "pin-prick" Liberal Governments, could not stand out on a real issue of the national life against the vast modern electorate. It was, then, essentially unimportant, as all recent generations had believed it to be, and as the placid absence from it throughout their lives of two-thirds of its members indicated.

Still, there remained a point of crisis. The Bill, amended in a way which would have left the Lords free to block precisely the measures now vitally in the Government's mind, must come back to the Commons. Would it travel to and fro in a maze of disagreement, or was this the

moment for unmasking the guns? Were there guns to unmask, after all? There were. On 21st July, the day after the final stage in the Lords, a letter from Mr Asquith to Mr Balfour was published, stating that the Commons would be asked to disagree with the Lords' amendments, and proceeding thus: "In the circumstances, should the necessity arise, the Government will advise the King to exercise his Prerogative to secure the passing into law of the Bill in substantially the same form in which it left the House of Commons, and His Majesty has been pleased to signify that he will consider it his duty to accept and act on that advice." There, then, was the guarantee, full and unequivocal.

The publication of it in that way may, perhaps, be considered the one tactical mistake Mr Asquith made. So far his discretion, as he could make plain when, some weeks later, Mr Balfour moved a vote of censure on him for "abusing his right as the adviser of the Crown" and keeping the guarantee in his pocket for eight months, had been unassailable. He had given no advice to create peers until the House of Lords had actually wrecked the Bill. Till then, he had himself said nothing about the use of the Royal Prerogative, whatever interpretation others had put upon his words. The letter to Mr Balfour had been written—a final effort of discretion—to keep the matter of the Prerogative, if possible, out of public view to the last; it was intended for communication to Lord Lansdowne and his friends, before the final vote in the Lords. But as it failed to affect that vote it turned out to be an unfortunate step. For when Mr Asquith rose in the House on 24th July to move the rejection of the Lords' amendments, and to make his statement, the Opposition, the facts being now known, simply refused him a hearing. He was howled down, and the Speaker adjourned the House without question put. The whole affair was made even more foolish and

undignified by the publication next day of a letter from Mr Balfour to Lord Newton advising the House of Lords to accept the original Bill and drop their amendments. For a few days some tension remained ; it was not quite certain that Mr Balfour or Lord Newton or anyone else could persuade enough of the extremists to abstain from voting to leave the victory to the small Liberal numbers in that House. A narrow margin of obstinacy would defeat them ; and there was a proposal that it might be as well to create a kind of preliminary batch of fifty peers to allow for the margin and to show that business was meant. However, the risk was taken with success ; and on 11th August, by a majority in the Lords of 131 to 114, the Parliament Bill was secured.

Strict thinking may regard the whole Act as hasty and muddled-headed. For years past Liberals had been decrying the composition and disputing the powers of the House of Lords ; they had taken office convinced that the struggle would have to come to a head. The controversy had been carried on to an accompaniment of the largest and most fundamental discussion of what a Second Chamber should be in a modern community, what it should represent, what functions of legislation and control it should exercise ; with a strong under-current of opinion that a modern community needed no Second Chamber at all. Yet the Parliament Act decided none of these things. It assumed that for the present a Second Chamber should continue to exist ; it relegated to the future the question of its reconstruction ; and, pending that, it assigned to the Chamber powers which might, on the analogy of some Second Chambers, be regarded as its due functions in that ultimate future or might be taken as a mere temporary bridle. After all the years of premonition, Liberals had no clear and definite Second Chamber to produce ; not one of their clever lawyers, apparently, could come down off plat-

forms to do a piece of respectable machine-work. They scrambled out of their great "veto campaign" with this shoddy makeshift.

There is more than one answer to the strict thinker. The obvious one is that real Second Chamber reform was not practical politics. Even if proposals based on a real theory of the place of a Second Chamber in representative government had been ready to hand, they would have embroiled the Ministry with those of its supporters, numerous among Liberals and almost the entire force of Labour, who saw no useful place for a Second Chamber; and would have involved it in weariful campaigning amid a mass of detailed schemes. For that it had no time, believing (and one need not attribute this to the motive of piling up electioneering capital) that there was social work more urgently needing to be done. But the better answer is that here again, as in the Budget fight, the Liberal leaders were shrewd. Broadly speaking, the Parliament Act, imperfect and tentative as it is, represents ordinary British common-sense. In the rather vague mind of the public two ideas were recognisably at work. On the one hand there was a distinct feeling that, after all, the House of Lords was a not quite "sporting" element in the Constitution; it did let through any Bills one side might send it, and only threw out Bills of the other side. There might be all sorts of sound reasons for this—the inevitable conservatism of any senate, the fact that it was precisely the more openly advanced side which must naturally undergo the checking, and so on; all that the plain man noticed was the obvious one-sidedness. But on the other hand he did not want the House of Lords "messed about with." He did not think that an irruption of "backwoodsmen" was very likely to be seen again, and he felt that the normal working House of Lords was probably about as representative of what a senate

should represent as any new-fangled Chamber could be, with the merit of a prestige which a new Chamber might never acquire. Nor, finally, was he sure what powers he would wish even a reformed Chamber to have ; roughly speaking, he did think already of the functions of the Lords as pretty nearly what the Parliament Act laid down—impotence in finance, and a power in other legislation to make the country think a bit longer. Therefore on the whole the Parliament Act was not merely the work of politicians ; it can claim statesmanship. On purely party lines, or on doctrinaire lines, a more complete and impeccable measure might have been forced through ; on lines that should compose the national mind by meeting its vague sense of what was fair all round nothing better could have been devised. Even the very element in it which has been most ridiculed, its temporary and provisional character, may be the most statesmanlike part of it. For it is equally true that the nation was in the main content to have something done about the House of Lords, and that it was not then, has never since been, and perhaps never will be, content to have anything permanent done with it. All this is not to say that the Parliament Act was consciously a building upon that “ general sense ” which is so difficult to find. It was, no doubt, for men absorbed in other purposes, the quickest way to free their hands. But that does not necessarily exclude some streak of genius in the affair as later reflection envisages it.

Certainly no such ideas were current at the time, for the measure was taken as genuinely temporary. That is partly why the country was so little interested at the end. The great struggle had led, not to condemnation and sentence, but to a remand—in custody. It is reminiscent of the long wrangle over the suspension of unruly members of the Commons, which never reached a conclusion, and has left one of the Standing Orders of

the House ending to this day in an undignified dash. It was, too, a piece of political history made for the humour of one who died just at this time, Sir W. S. Gilbert. He was drowned at the end of May bathing in the grounds of his house at Harrow. He had deserved his fame, for he and Sir Arthur Sullivan had beyond question given the English stage a new and native art-form; and he had a rare kind of immortality, in that his name had given to the English language an adjective for just such unintentional whimsicalities of politics as this invincible old reprobate of a House of Lords.

Early in the summer that heavy curtain of apprehension which, through all these years, hung behind the restlessness of home politics was violently shaken again. On 2nd July news arrived of the appearance of a German gunboat, the *Panther*, at the port of Agadir in Morocco. This focussed sharply all the recent suspicions of mutual international obligations; was Germany determined to test them by a renewed intimation that she did not accept one of the cardinal points of our relations with France? Hot-headed tendencies to regard the gunboat's mission instantly as an act of hostility were certainly not checked by Mr Asquith's statement in the Commons, with its references to British interests and our treaty obligations to France; and drew something like definite authority from a speech by Mr Lloyd George at the Mansion House a fortnight later, which had a startling tone of warning to Germany. Three days later rumours—inevitable after such a speech—of orders to the British fleet marked the peak of the excitement; it subsided rapidly after a prompt denial of the rumours, and even more after another statement by Mr Asquith which, though not very clear, implied that intervention at Agadir had never been in question, and hinted at prospects of territorial arrangements elsewhere in Africa,



compensating Germany for French predominance in Morocco. The air, then, must be clearing.

And none too soon, was the feeling of those who lived in expectation of every kind of disaster under a Liberal Government. For, in a summer of extreme heat, industrial tempers were going from bad to worse. Not only was there, as it seemed, a kind of running fire of strikes—seamen had come out at various ports in June, carters and vanmen (a partly sympathetic strike refusing to handle goods for the shipping lines with which the seamen were in dispute) in July, the London dockers at the beginning of August—but every strike was attended by violence. At Hull and Cardiff, at Manchester, which had had to call for a strong force of London police and for Scots Greys from the York garrison, there had been fighting in the streets. Strikes were, indeed, settled; Mr Askwith, of the Board of Trade, constantly negotiating, became one of the best-known public figures of the time. Seamen and dockers gained at least some of the most pressing of their points. But hardly had these settlements been announced when the railwaymen began to move, and after violent scenes in Liverpool, where two men were shot dead and two hundred people injured, and at Llanelly, where again two were shot and four more killed by the explosion of a petrol tank, the whole railway system was suddenly threatened. On 15th August twenty-four hours' notice was given of a general railway strike. It was a serious climax in more ways than one—serious in its causes, for the men were coming out to break up the conciliation boards they had accepted so recently as in 1907, in which they had entirely lost faith; and serious in its character, because for the first time the two great skilled unions, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, were acting together in conjunction with a newer body, the General

Railway Workers, which included all the unskilled. Here were more signs of the times which were not passing unobserved, the massing of the unions and the sympathetic strike ; it had been remarked that the seamen had won their case largely by the coincident strikes of carmen and dockers ; and, lest they might in some way be used to mitigate the effects of the railway strike, the London lightermen, whose case had just been settled, were coming out again. "Continental," the newspapers cried ; our strikes, like our crimes, were becoming disturbingly un-English.

The railway strike did not last long. After a vain truce for possible conciliation it began on all railways on 17th August. On 19th August it was over. The men's case had nominally been met by the promise of an immediate Special Commission, all strikers being meanwhile reinstated. But the truth was that the strike had been too big an attempt. Work never did quite cease on all lines, and motor traffic was already at a stage of development which, though far from adequate to meet very grave difficulties, was enough to bring some discouragement to the strikers.

Moreover they had not timed their effort well ; the beginning or the end of the holiday season would have given them more chance of producing disorganisation. Striking in the middle of it, they did little more than give a mild shock to a not very interesting summer. Flying made no notable advances, save for the first non-stop flight from London to Paris, and was still so experimental that Army Estimates providing five aeroplanes met with no criticism ; and the first naval airship, launched in May, broke her back in her first voyage after only two minutes' flight. The popular craze of the moment, roller-skating, which for a few months invaded all social ranks, as cycling had done in an earlier year, and was seen at Prince's as well as in cheap rinks hastily

run up in the suburbs, was not an occupation for a hot summer. "Standard bread" and "paper-bag cookery" were little more than newspaper rivalries, one paper offering facilities for getting a guaranteed bread, another providing its readers with paper bags; but both ideas had the quality so essential for newspaper purposes of being endlessly discussable in the morning train to the City: was it true that a too-white bread meant the elimination from flour of elements vital for our teeth and our digestion, and that we must go back to sound old rural stone-milling? Did paper bags, which in any case added an amusing kind of conjuring element to the dull round of saucepan and oven, really retain indispensable juices in the food, and had they qualities peculiarly commendable in small kitchens? So the respective "stunts" tacked themselves on to the growing movement for fitness and week-end cottages and garden suburbs and daylight-saving (was not this the first year of whole-page advertising of penny packets of garden seeds?), and on to a kitchen economy that the lady of the house could manage herself, for bungalow towns were also beginning to grow along the coast. As for sport, we were not as yet hardened enough to foreign competition to take quite easily French victories in lawn tennis; there was hardly consolation in the laugh against them when their famous *La Gioconda* was calmly stolen from the Louvre under the noses of the guardians. But Burgess's success in swimming the Channel on 6th September—the first since Captain Webb's feat in the seventies—had a comforting John Bull quality about it; he had set himself to the task through so many defeats.

The railway settlement, it soon appeared, satisfied nobody. The companies, thinking they had taken the measure of the unions, regarded the Special Commission as a futility; and the men were merely exasperated

when, at its meetings in September, they heard railway managers proposing that all railway employees should be put permanently under military law. In this, as in the other cases, peace was the very flimsiest papering over of cracks. Nor were the cracks only between masters and men. Labour was inclined to quarrel with the Liberals, resenting, however unreasonably, the sharp measures taken to keep order, and even more the signs of a counter-organisation in reserve which had been revealed by the announcement that the country had been mapped into "military areas" for emergencies. It was taken as a piece of gratuitous emphasis when, a month after the strike was over, the War Office published a provisional scheme for subsidising motor-lorries in return for the right to mobilise them in case of "national danger." Labour was unnecessarily sensitive about this: it was not a scheme for industrial emergencies in its origin. Civilian motor equipment had advanced so rapidly (the London General Omnibus Company, for instance, ran its last horse-bus on 25th October of this year), while military replacement of the old horse-transport was cramped inside the Estimates, that some scheme for a claim on civilian motors was to be expected.

Pat on the speculations this aroused as to what the next war might be like, a war broke out. But it was one which promised little novelty; it was of only too familiar a type. Italy, cutting abruptly into the bigger Powers' allocations of African spheres, descended upon Tripoli, after a sketchy ultimatum alleging the condition of government in that region to be a menace to her interests. An easy landing of troops was soon followed by a most awkwardly determined and fanatical resistance; and for the rest of the year subjugation went on in ways which revolted the war-correspondents of other nations. Anxiety was reawakened; but France and

Germany, after a brief flare-up of alarmist rumours in September, were coming to terms on the basis which had been indicated in the early days of the Agadir affair: Germany was to have compensations in the Congo territory in return for recognition of predominant French interests in Morocco.

But that affair had left its mark upon the supporters of the Government in a mistrust of their leaders, which came into the open in a debate on foreign policy in November. This was the first systematic expression of the protest against "secret diplomacy" which, in the years to come, was to be the line of democratic effort for peace. It had, of course, its specific point to fasten on; it was easy enough, behind all the crises of this year, to perceive the "blind spot" which was making international relations so unsteady—the unknown factors in our understanding with France. Sir Edward Grey's assurances in this debate that, beyond the arrangements about Morocco, which had now been made fully public, there were no secret treaty engagements, was not so conciliatory as it was meant to be; the use of the word "treaty" was noticed, for it left the door uncomfortably open to engagements not necessarily in treaty form. More generally the rank and file had observed much in the pronouncements of Ministers which seemed to them deplorably far from what *Liberal* language should be in a time of such mutual suspicion. An exchange of offices by which Mr McKenna went to the Home Office and Mr Winston Churchill to the Admiralty was not reassuring, and had in fact all the meaning which the party put upon it. Nor had the echoes of Mr Lloyd George's Mansion House speech died away. Sir Edward Grey's statement in the debate, that no Ministerial explanation had followed it because the German Ambassador's request for one had been in terms which precluded explanation, showed that Germany had taken

such a speech from the most democratic member of the Cabinet as the clearest possible indication that the Cabinet was united in a rather hostile attitude about Agadir. That had, indeed, been the only conclusion that most Liberals could draw ; how could they believe what a few knew and a few more suspected—that Mr Lloyd George, for the sake of an effective appearance before City bankers with no love for his finance, had dangerously committed a divided Cabinet, and done so with a sudden reversal of the very line he had himself been taking in the division ? But even without this knowledge the incident was sinister enough ; Conservatives saw in it a weakness of foreign policy liable to issue in erratic demagogic plunges, and Liberals a rather ignoble surrender to cheap national pride.

However, as was to happen more than once in Mr Lloyd George's career, his immediate importance to the party threw mistrust into the background. He was the main power-unit of their social reform, and they needed now all his energy. For this year's great instalment of reform, launched, it had appeared, smoothly enough in the spring, was running into stormy waters. This was the Invalidity and Unemployment Insurance Bill. The Bill was in two parts : Part II., the insurance against unemployment, applied only to certain trades ; Part I., the health insurance, applied to practically all employed persons, and was, for all interest of the moment, the Bill. The scheme, in brief, was that every employed person should be obliged to keep a card upon which every week the employer was legally bound to place an Inland Revenue stamp. The cost of this stamp, 4d., was to be provided, half by the employer, and half by deduction from the wage ; the State's addition of a contribution, and its provision of the cost of management of the fund, would so raise the value of the weekly payment as to make it, in effect, a weekly premium of 9d. " Ninepence for

Fourpence" became the catchword of Liberal speeches on the Bill. The benefits of the insurance were to be free medical attendance—practitioners grouping themselves upon panels for the purpose—and necessary drugs and appliances.

On the whole, the Bill had had a friendly reception. It was criticised, of course, especially in regard to the actuarial basis. Here the Government had laid themselves open by their original miscalculations on the previous great social reform, Old Age Pensions.<sup>1</sup> In both cases estimates were, inevitably, difficult; really adequate statistics were not to be obtained. It was strongly felt that the figure of ninepence was a far too rosy guess, and had been too easily concocted for platform use. But these were details; amid the distractions of the Coronation, and the last rumblings of the House of Lords controversy, the Bill had made a good start. All the talk for years past about national efficiency, a sense that in this matter at any rate Germany was ahead of us, combined with all the inclination—earnest at its best, vaguely pacificatory at its lowest—to do something for the industrial unrest, produced acquiescence; some such measure was bound to come.

A different spirit now appeared, and worked itself up to strange heat. It might almost seem that Parliament was falling into a habit of bringing back from its holidays a sharp change of temper; just as in 1910 it had re-assembled in a mood of suspicion of the Conference, so now its mood on the Insurance Bill had sharpened. The truth was that the Opposition were beginning to see chances. They did not exaggerate the effect of Liberal disaffection in the matter of foreign affairs; still, it was a weak spot on which to play. Far more to their purpose was Labour disaffection in the matter of the strikes, because it was evident that differing ranks

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., p. 320.

of Labour had criticisms of the Bill to make, which in that mood of disaffection might drive some wedges into the Government's majority. The first criticism had come from the great friendly societies. To begin with, it had been little more than a kind of jealous guardedness; the Foresters, for instance, had protested against any "taking away of the right of the Order to continue its own arrangements for medical benefit." But this opened out into a jealousy which struck at the roots of the scheme. The Bill had had to envisage two methods of insurance — one through the friendly societies and trade unions, and one worked, like the Savings Bank, through the Post Office; it would have been wasteful and stupid not to make use of the system which already insured vast numbers of wage-earners just because another system had to be devised for those outside such insurance. But here a serious danger emerged. The whole point of the Bill was to bring *every* employed person under insurance; that must necessarily mean bringing in, as the direct Post Office contributors for whom the State must be responsible, a very large number of cases which the friendly societies would think too bad to insure; the result of the Bill, then, would be to force the friendly societies to pool their own wealth, securely based on experience of their business, with all the risks of the Post Office insurance which had to proceed at present upon a good deal of actuarial guesswork. Thus the aristocracy of employment was up in arms. Its humbler ranks were also ready to be restive. For the mere instinctive dislike of having their wages docked every week, whether they liked it or not, was made far more serious when it was led by such prominent Labour men as Mr Lansbury, Mr Snowden, Mr Jowett and Mr Will Thorne into a protest against any contributory element in the scheme at all. This protest was a perfectly sound corollary of



the claim to "a right to work"; the nation must be responsible for the labour it needed for its prosperity; it had no business in existing economic conditions to make that labour even partially responsible for itself.

There was matter enough here, it might seem, with the barely expressed but real Liberal resentment of such ungrateful attitudes, to imperil the Bill. But it was all, so far, within the normal range of political controversy. There was now to appear hostility which was the first movement of a kind of opposition to an elected majority new in British politics. One section of it was almost ludicrous. Conservative newspapers, making the discovery that under the Bill housewives would actually have to stamp the cards of domestic servants, worked up a wild campaign against the indignity of "stamp-licking," and filled the Albert Hall with a befurred meeting of Society ladies and comfortably circumstanced women who, fired by some rhetoric from Mr Hilaire Belloc about "the infernal impudence" of asking "the better classes" to collect a tax for nothing, registered their determination to refuse obedience to the law and put the Government in the impossible position of having to punish them by the thousand. This was rebellion *pour rire*. There was something much more serious in the hostility of a large part of the medical profession. Here, as in the case of the friendly societies, at first only a rather guarded attitude had been taken towards the Bill, with some criticism of the scale of payment, and of the arrangements for the provision of drugs. But feeling grew stronger and stronger, until late in the year the British Medical Association definitely demanded a revision of the scale to their satisfaction, the fixing of a limit of income for panel patients, and more medical representation on the local committees under the Bill. These were all points which might quite properly be raised for discussion. Unfortunately the profession,

kindest and most generous to the poor of all professions, was stampeded by the same Conservative newspapers into the same kind of undignified protestations about its dignity, and into an Albert Hall meeting of refusal to work the Bill when passed.

Militancy, it can be seen, was spreading. The new suffrage movement had laid down the proposition that a cause which had no adequate political weapons was justified in refusing obedience; they had earlier in the year even found a way to break so mild an affair as the Census legislation, by sleeping out on commons so as not to be included in the returns. Now opponents of the Government were going to take the line that, swamped by a mass electorate led by mercenary promises, and deprived by the Parliament Act of any check upon the caprices of a General Election, they also might use the weapons of lawlessness to make the Government's path impossibly difficult. It was, however, insincere to contemplate using them against the Insurance Act. For when it became clear that internal party feelings on the Government side were not, after all, going to hinder its passage, the Opposition, walking out in a body when the closure was put, evaded actually voting against it; and the Lords did not exercise upon it even the suspensive powers that were left to them. Not that this meant merely an unworthy fear of the working people in the constituencies. Social reform was far from being a monopoly of one side; and Unionists would be stultifying themselves if opposition to the Liberal way of doing things was always to go to the length of trying to prevent the things being done. They would only try to make distinctions between the recognised need for social reform and a dictation of the terms of reform at the polls. They found a kind of ally in the new Dean of St Paul's, Dr Inge, who in this October earned at one blow the title of "the gloomy dean" by a jeremiad

on "the fetish of democracy," the "dehumanised industrialism" which was dragging England to a fall, and on modern tendencies towards an "unnatural and flabby horror of taking life."

The Opposition had had some party dissensions themselves. The Conference on the House of Lords had produced a rank-and-file mistrust of leaders among Unionists as well as among Liberals, and its break-up, it will be noticed, had been said to be "forced" upon Mr Balfour. It was felt now that he was too steeped in the traditions of older parliamentary days and older habits of debate to be the leader the party required for the new and less scrupulous fighting which each side was now attributing to the other; if the Government's opponents were refusing to obey the law, the Government, they could say, was refusing to be bound by the constitution. Moreover, Mr Balfour had never really recovered his ground with the nation after the long and precarious balancing act of the days of the Tariff Reform campaign; an appearance of indecision, never far from him throughout a career made a little misty to the ordinary man by his reputation as a philosopher, had become then securely fastened upon him, and the result was that now "Balfour must go." He "went" in that sense by resigning the leadership of the party on 8th November. The clamour against him had concerned itself little about considerations which had kept the party in Parliament a good deal less emphatic than the popular Press—the problem of his successor. For that raised the question whether the party was still Conservative with a Unionist wing, in which case Mr Walter Long, a member of the traditional country gentleman type, was the heir to the leadership, or was in all its effective fighting capacity Unionist, in which case Mr Austen Chamberlain, the son of the great fighter, had his claim. In the end a decision which should have been historic was burked

by both of these standing aside, and the party, to its astonishment, found itself being led by Mr Bonar Law, a Glasgow member, of a certain shrewd strength in debate, but with no Cabinet experience (his only office so far had been that of Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade) and unknown to the general public. It was a flattish ending to so much swashbuckling about leadership.

Before it awoke to the enormities of "stamp-licking" London society had been besieging at one moment the philosophical lectures of M. Bergson, in one of its periodical highbrow crazes, and at another the ticket-offices for a projected prize-fight between Jack Johnson, the American negro, and Bombardier Wells. These affairs, under the influence of American mass-methods, were issuing from the plush-and-gilt privacies of the National Sporting Club into premises that would hold enough money to bring such champions into the ring. This particular affair did not come off. Protests against it, as not legitimate boxing on points, but "a thinly veiled reversion to the prize-ring," induced the London County Council to threaten the licence of Earl's Court, where it was to have taken place, and the Home Secretary to intimate that he would consider it illegal. In the end there was no direct clash with the authorities; the Earl's Court freeholders, concerned for their licence, got an injunction in the High Court, and on that the promoters of the fight abandoned it. But the interest of the whole incident is that the real inhibition of the fight lay in a public opinion still capable of revulsion from American exploitations of "bruising," and still more from the invasion of such spectacles by women, who—curious as it may sound in those days of excessively feminine skirts and uncropped hair—were being accused, with their sports and their cigarette-smoking and slang and "ragging," of aping men to a deplorable extent.

The publication of the first analysis of the Census statistics, revealing the fact that there were over a million more of them than of men was, of course, seized upon by the opponents of Women's Suffrage, who were holding their ground. Once more a Bill had been passed in May and delayed and quibbled over, till once more in the dark days of November, with the end of the session bringing the Bill's extinction, the exasperation of the militants broke out. On the 22nd a force of them, with hammers and other implements concealed, burst upon the West End streets, smashing club and shop windows indiscriminately; 223 were arrested. Hitherto all their violence had been confined to the regions of Government and Parliament; this meant that they were going to make war, so far as they could, on society, till society moved its legislators to action. A hint of the extent to which various modes of the warfare had been planned was given a month later, when a woman was charged with attempting to set fire to the contents of a post-box, though that kind of destruction did not become serious till the following year. The destruction of property by the window-raid was alarming enough; it had followed the reception of a deputation by Mr Asquith, to which he had been more uncompromising than ever: "Get rid of me," he had said, "if you can. But I am head of the Government, and I am not convinced." The situation grew steadily uglier. Suffragist interrupters of meetings (they entirely prevented Mr Asquith from speaking at the City Temple by fastening themselves to pillars) were being thrown out with increasing violence, especially when, as at a speech by Mr Lloyd George in Bath, the interrupters were male sympathisers with the movement—women were finding it increasingly difficult to get into meetings, whether they were suffragists or not. Meetings of their own were being forcibly broken up. But it was at least better to be thought

dangerous than regarded as a show, or damned as an exasperating irrelevance.

The King and Queen had sailed for India in November, and the Great Durbar was held at Delhi, the old capital of the emperors, on 12th December, in a vast new city of temporary but marvellously elaborate camps, which suddenly took on a new meaning when the Royal Proclamation revealed the well-kept secret that a new Delhi was to arise, and the seat of government to be transferred thither from Calcutta. Whatever nervousness there may have been about the occasion, in view of the growing acuteness of Indian national feeling, there was nothing publicly to mar its *éclat*, save that one Indian prince had to explain away an act of apparent discourtesy. National feeling was recognised by an announcement in the proclamation that the partition of Bengal, a source of recent irritation, was to be reversed; and it was hoped, too, that the placing of government at Delhi, with its new House of an Indian Parliament, and the sense of a return to the traditional scenes of such unity as India had ever known, would give fresh and more conciliatory meaning to British rule than had attached to it in Calcutta, where it had simply dropped aforetime into the seat of John Company, with all its associations of exploitation and subjugation, and "carried on."

Fresh life was stirring in the Far East in more exciting ways. In October, rebellion had broken out in China. It happened that the public mind had been turned in that direction only a few weeks earlier by the obituary notices of Sir Robert Hart, who, in a remarkably long career as Inspector-General of the Chinese Customs (he virtually created their maritime customs system), had come nearer to the rulers and high officials of China than any European before him. But anyhow the newspapers could reckon on popular interest in the rebellion, for it was headed by Sun Yat Sen, and the

incidents in which he had figured at the Chinese Legation in London in 1898 were too much like a sensational novel to fade easily from the memory. London had quite believed then that, as an undesirable agitator, he had been decoyed into the Legation for the purpose of being beheaded with Oriental imperturbability in a London back garden. His election as the first President of the Chinese Republic, and a colossal substitute for the now weakening pantomime, Reinhardt's production of *The Miracle* at Olympia, provided the big headlines for the end of the year.

## CHAPTER III

### 1912 : STAMP-LICKING, WINDOW-SMASHING, AND ULSTER-COVENANTING

UPON politics just now the curtain was never rung down. After the delayed Budget of 1909 and the crisis with the Lords in 1910 the country had grown accustomed to a rise, rather than the old-fashioned decline, of political activity in the winter months. So the great London stage which he had enjoyed and scarified through a long life was full when the news came of the death of Henry Labouchere. He reached very far back into the life of the Liberal party, for as a young diplomat he had unpardonably "cheeked" Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office, and he had first entered Parliament as Bradlaugh's colleague in the representation of Northampton. The whole odd make-up of his character had been entertaining. A very wealthy man, with the cynical detached air of one without a serious interest of any kind, he was a convinced and passionate Radical. Known to the world for his relentless pursuit in *Truth*, the weekly paper he founded, of every kind of knave and sharper, he always used to say that it was mainly his own association with such people in a reckless and extravagant youth which had given him the "nose" for them. His "black list" was the dread of shady characters who kept just inside the law, for he had not the slightest hesitation in carrying exposure of them beyond the edge of the libel laws. He would pillory a rogue, even if the rogue were clever enough to get damages out of him; and thus did work for society that no one had done before him.



Politics could not in any case have declined much at the moment, for the Insurance Act was still very much a battle-ground. It was on the Statute Book, but it was not to come into force until 1st July 1912, and that left space for animosities to survive. One serious danger was over; the great friendly societies, as well as the trade unions, finally agreed in January to become "Approved Societies" under the Act—that is, to combine the new insurance cards with their own systems. But the stamp-licking opposition was still in violent action, and the medical profession had not been conciliated. Mr Lloyd George, whose efforts in a series of conferences had brought in the friendly societies, now assailed in a characteristic way the formidable difficulties which remained. He was still negotiating with the doctors; he set to work to mobilise popular support if necessary against them (he was talking of the possibilities of a State medical service), and certainly against the stamp-licking campaign. Absurd as its shrill cries were from one point of view, Mr Lloyd George was too clever to under-estimate their effect. He knew that, however safe his scheme might be in the great industries and in the publicity of factories and workshops, yet over a vast field of more traditional and intimate employment steady influences were active against him—mistresses with their maids, masters with their butlers and gardeners and chauffeurs, farmers with their men. Had they not always, it was asked, been sure of kindness and help in sickness and unemployment? And could they now wish to chill the old association into the hard business-like relations of a stamped card, losing incidentally twopence a week from their wages? If the bland conviction with which the questions were put showed a sad lack of humour, the people to whom they were put were hardly in a position to reply; personal contacts were too close. Mr Lloyd George

was not blind to the possible creation in this way of a dead-weight upon the working of his Act, by the alienation from it of this mass of employed persons always rather inert politically, strangers to far-reaching industrial ideas, and even ready to resent being classed with "industry." So under his ægis a "Liberal Insurance Committee" was formed, whose business was to go up and down the country combating these influences. This was a new portent in politics, and was hotly attacked. Was this official evangelising to be expected always now in Mr Lloyd George's train, and were the funds for it drawn from public sources? The latter implication was easily rebuffed.

Alongside this battle not yet closed were the preliminary flashes of the one not yet opened in form—Home Rule. For that and for Welsh Disestablishment the Government could afford to wait no longer, since it was certain that both would have to be driven through the three years' suspensive process which the Lords could still impose. Through how much else Home Rule might have to be driven was still a matter of opinion. As it had become plainer and plainer, in the previous year, that nothing could save the absolute veto of the Lords, Irish Unionists had entered upon speech and action too uncompromising to sound at that early stage otherwise than exaggerated and unreal. Even Unionist papers had denied the stories of arming for rebellion in Ulster which other Unionist papers had been printing; and talk at the Ulster Unionist Council in September about a "provisional Government" had sounded more petulant than ominous. So now, in January 1912, when Mr Churchill was being warned about a meeting that had been arranged for him in Belfast, and was being told that Ulstermen would prevent by force the delivery of a Home Rule speech by the son of the man who had told them once that they would fight and they would be

right, there was no great alarm; most people took it as a police matter of a kind quite familiar in Belfast. Naturally there was still more discounting of high talk when the news came that Mr Churchill, giving up the provocation of a Home Rule demonstration in Ulster Hall itself, and speaking instead in a huge marquee, had had a most successful meeting; yet the fact that 4000 troops had been under arms in the city at the time did not entirely escape notice.

But the Insurance Act and Ulster were not really the two preoccupations of the country. These were much more the industrial situation and the militant suffragist campaign. The latter, because it was becoming clear that every one of the various attitudes which the nation was taking (and it was a tribute to militant methods that no one now was without one attitude or another) was so beautifully conclusive that all avenues of understanding were closing. The Government's position was unanswerable when it said that, in view of the existence not merely of shades of opinion but of definite opposition from some of the most important members of the Cabinet, it was impossible to produce a Government measure. The rank and file of the Liberals were on quite sensible ground when they maintained that the party had definite previous engagements to much social legislation, and that to risk disintegrating their majority by setting all this aside for a highly controversial measure would ruin suicidally the best chance that, with a bit more patience, the suffragists might have. Equally defensible was the line of many good Liberals that so great a change in the electorate could not be patched on to an already patchwork franchise, but must come as part of a fundamental new enfranchisement. Almost as strongly held, if less defensible, was the other Liberal line that, as the only measure which could possibly pass in existing

circumstances would be very limited, they could not be expected to make special efforts for a Bill which would create mainly a propertied vote for the Unionists. Outright opponents of the movement could fairly say that a proposal which so cut across all party lines must not be allowed to force a vital change upon the country in a fog of heat and confusion. But the suffragists as a body were unanswerable when they said that the very fact of absorption in social reform made the claim of women in the modern world to a vote more and not less urgent; and that the repeated passage now of their Bills, no longer an empty gesture in a desultory House, but the result of real debate, did give them a right to demand that so great a cause should cut across party lines to the end. There lay the insoluble difficulty; one side certain that you could not, the other that you not only could but should, leave politics out of it. The militants, reasonable in unreason, were at any rate unanswerable when they said that, difficult or not, the thing could be done, and that they would make the Government's life impossible till it was done. And finally the general public was unanswerable when it replied that that merely put its back up, and just showed why women had no votes. All these conflicting attitudes were far too defensible, and the consciousness of this was what was worrying everybody. The question was being shut into a space handsomely provided with any number of doors quite well constructed save for the simple purpose of opening.

The other anxiety of the moment, the industrial situation, continued to do the very thing which so angered the militants—put their claims on to a secondary plane. The depicting of Labour and Capital at a tug-of-war on the title-page of *Punch* for the year was not a piece of casual generalisation. More and more that was how the country came to see the situation—as one big

encounter heaving obscurely under the various particular struggles. Strikes of which the obstinacy bore apparently no relation to their origin in insignificant points of punctilio; settlements which one side or the other almost openly refused to work on the very morrow of their acceptance; a strike in one occupation exploding a kind of Chinese cracker of strikes in trades more or less associated with it; a harder tone in employers summoned by the Board of Trade to negotiations; a growing familiarity with violence in the struggles—all suggested even to the least attentive mind that something more was afoot than an epidemic of striking. This was true; Labour was moving, and Capital knew it. The easy party thing to say was that, with Liberals in office, relying largely upon Labour support, and in any case somewhat hand-tied by humanitarian sentiment, Labour was out to make the most of its opportunities, regardless of all considerations. But the matter was more serious than that. The unrest was due to causes which, whatever party had been in office, would have had their way. The broad simple one moving in the mass was, no doubt, plain discontent feeling the strength it could now wield. Generations which had had an increasingly efficient education had also had now for twenty years a cheap Press to make them more actively conscious, and also more aware of all that—in no derogatory use of the phrase—money could buy. And those same twenty years or so, creating with swift developments of markets and transport wholly new standards of wealth among the wealthy, had displayed to a Labour world, widened in its ideas and singularly well able to watch what was going on, a really tremendous profusion of spending. Meanwhile the strong revival of Trade Unionism in the late eighties and nineties of the last century had come to its growth, and the unions were vigorous. Here was the raw material of

trouble ; and to recognise it as discontent did not, to any thoughtful people, put it out of court.

Then there were political causes. It was true (though here we are rather in a circle of cause and effect) that the change of Government in 1906 had emphasised the unrest. Partly that was the Conservatives' own fault. In the Tariff Reform campaign they had raised something which was bound to confront Capital and Labour ; there was no phase of the discussion of industrial prosperity which did not provoke the question of what voice Labour had in the disposal of it. It would hardly be too much to say that in its later, rougher stages the issue of Protection had been mainly a class issue. The sweeping victory of December 1905 had excited Labour ; since then Liberal finance, with its steeply graduated taxation and heavy death duties, and the Budget of 1909, with all its platform accompaniments, had hardened the heart of capital.

And finally there was another element at work upon all this raw material of the deep disagreement which was felt to be reducing strike settlements to mere temporary smoothings of the surface. The impulse of the mass might be little more than plain impatience with its conditions ; the leaders on both sides knew that this was the force to be used for more than adjustments of wages and hours. Trade Unionism had looked abroad, both to the Syndicalists of France and to the Industrial Workers of the World in the United States. The ideas of the two were different—the one that of great corporations of labour controlling distinct industries (an idea translated just now in England by some of the movement's intellectuals into the form of Guild Socialism), the other that of universal and not local action—but they both had one object, the complete change of the existing economic system, and one policy, that of “direct action.” Of course the knowledge

of these tendencies was not confined to industrial leaders; they were hinted at in all the newspaper comments on the "un-English" aspects of recent strikes, and broadly enough too in Mr Gosling's remark, at the Trade Union Congress of 1911, that there would be no more sectional strikes. But not everyone perceived that these were the real reasons why, in almost every case just now, the strikers sooner or later raised questions of union recognition and resented local or sectional negotiations; and why the employers on their side stiffened themselves against recognition and against agreements of a national scope. And it was for these reasons that the Government's efforts to find some general machinery for the adjustment of disputes, the appointment at the end of 1910 of Mr D. J. Shackleton as permanent Labour Adviser to the Home Office, and the appointment of thirteen representatives of employers and thirteen Labour leaders to act as an Industrial Council, had had but disappointing results; the Council soon fell into inanition.

The question of union recognition was still keeping the railway world at thinly disguised war. The Government had not been able to persuade the managers to accord open recognition to the unions; they continued to insist that the men's representatives on the Conciliation Boards must be sectionally elected. The men had been just enabled to accept the settlement by a provision that they might elect their own secretaries on the boards, which opened the door to the admission in fact, though not ostensibly, of union officials. It was only one of those truces that both sides use for rehabilitating their forces. The process on the men's side revealed ominously what the fight about recognition was coming to; the beginning of 1912 saw the combination of all grades of railway workers (with the important exception, however, of the Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)

into one big National Union of Railwaymen ; the strike of 1911 bore at least that fruit.

The other question, that of national scope of agreements, was at the root of trouble which now rose with a swiftness that drove everything else into the background when Parliament met. The indurated struggle in South Wales, over the case of men whose work at a peculiarly difficult part of the coal-face made piece-work rates most unfair to them, had turned from the insoluble complexities of all attempts to arrive at abnormal piece-rates to a demand for a minimum wage, as the only fair basis, which spread with alarming rapidity to the other great coal-fields. By the beginning of March more than 1,000,000 men were out for a national minimum wage, and that was a figure no strike had ever yet attained. The Government had already intervened, its formula for meeting the contending views being, for the miners, the recognition of the claim to a minimum wage, and for the coal-owners, the negotiation of the exact figure not on a national but on a local basis. The miners might have accepted the formula, but as some of the coal-owners refused, and as these included the South Wales owners with whom the dispute had grown so bitter, the miners swung back to a demand for a national element in the shape of a stipulation that, whatever the locally agreed figure, it must not anywhere be less than five shillings per shift. Negotiations broke down ; the prospect of the disorganisation which a long coal stoppage would produce (the railways, though they had now learned their lesson and were never to be caught again with such short stocks, were already reducing services) compelled the Government to take other action. Mr Asquith introduced on 19th March a Bill embodying his formula ; the swiftness of its passage—it became law within a fortnight—and the abstention of the Opposition from voting showed such a force of public opinion for the



ending of the dispute that neither owners nor miners could afford to wreck it. The latter, indeed, balloted for continuing the strike, but the smallness of the majority allowed the Miners' Federation to order a return to work. They had, after all, achieved the principle of a minimum wage, and the Act, passed at first for a period of three years, remains by annual renewal in operation. The importance of such a step forward in industrial legislation almost escaped the notice of the country at large in the pressure of its anxiety. Its mind was so set upon the formula as terms of peace that it hardly noticed the vital change in the conception of the relations of the State to industry; the enactment of a minimum wage, not for a poor and unorganised class of workers, but for a very large and powerful body of labour, surrendered all the old ideas of competition. What did not, however, pass unnoticed was the ominous portent of "direct action." The miners' strike gave it a new meaning. Any kind of strike might cause loss of wealth: what had now come home to the least observant was that in a highly organised modern community there were some strikes which could cause paralysis.

There had not been much freedom of mind to attend to the news on 7th March that Amundsen had reached the South Pole; he had just returned to Hobart. It was twelve months since the ship of Captain Scott's expedition, back there from landing him and his party, had awakened the world to the fact that Amundsen was then making his dash, and added all the excitement of a contest to the dangerous enterprise. Now there could be little doubt that Amundsen must have the glory of being the first to reach the Pole. However, until news actually came from Captain Scott, the laurels need not quite pass from the country which had been the pioneer of polar exploration. But the coal strike was over, and attention

only too free to take the shock when, on 15th April, came the appalling news of the loss of the White Star liner *Titanic*. At her launch in the previous June there had been much in the eulogies of her, as by far the biggest liner in the world, which now reminded men of that old Greek shrinking from the over-confidence which provokes high heaven. For she had been described as so huge that the sea, so far from endangering her, could scarcely even disturb the comfort of life aboard her; passengers need not know, if they did not want to, that they were at sea at all. And now the sea, calling up its terrors, had drifted an iceberg across her track in the night, and engulfed her in a few minutes. Nor did the news come as a single shock. The earliest curt telegrams had indicated that no lives had been lost; this could be better believed in the light of all that had been written about her than the frightful fact, which followed immediately, that 1635 persons had been drowned. Long official inquiries into the disaster came to little in the end. It certainly appeared that regulations about boat accommodation had not kept pace with the rapid growth in the size of these great liners; they had not actually been revised, though of course in practice much extended, since 1894, when only ships of some 10,000 tons had been contemplated, whereas the *Titanic* was a ship of 46,800 tons. It was made clear, too, that whatever dangers these huge vessels might diminish or eliminate, they actually created a new one in the difficulty of launching boats from such heights; it might even be impossible in some conditions to launch boats at all on one side. What suspicions emerged at the inquiries of human failure in the crisis of the disaster may be left now unexplored; there was more than enough of human fineness. Many distinguished people, both British and American, attracted by the experience of making the first voyage in the vaunted liner, perished

with her. Of all of them the individual most vivid to the public mind was probably Mr W. T. Stead. His earliest fame, when articles of his in *The Pall Mall Gazette* trying to rouse the social conscience on the subject of prostitution had been pushed to a point that landed him in gaol, was by this time rather forgotten. Later activities of his busy mind—the success of his ingenious periodical, *The Review of Reviews*, his eager absorption in spiritualism and the problems of the life after death, and his published “conversations” with a disembodied spirit whom he named “Julia”—had built up for him another kind of fame.

One curious incident of the wreck may be mentioned. The Hope diamond was on board the *Titanic* on its way to a new owner in the United States. This was one of the notorious jewels of the world to which superstition had always been attached, and there were many who believed that it had now accomplished its final stroke of maleficence.

Long before anything was published of the results of the official inquiries, the shock had passed. But an almost angry tone in the investigations on both sides of the Atlantic (on some points Great Britain and the United States were not far off recriminations) was one sign of how severe it had been. That is not difficult to understand; there was more in the shock than the heavy loss of life. Such a disaster had the aspect of a terrible reminder to a human race growing more and more confident of its command over nature and the material world. Scientific knowledge covered now more ground with any single step it took than a whole century’s movement of human progress a short time ago. Chemical discovery and mechanical invention were wholly remaking the range of men’s lives, and not by slow separate stages; each fresh leap opened up one longer and more startling. An invention, for instance,

had but just begun to revolutionise ideas of transport on land when it launched mankind at last into the air. Old fears became ridiculous ; possibilities of exhaustion of coal supplies only turned invention towards less reckless and extravagant production of heat and power. Panic about a world populated beyond the means of supporting life gave way to a comfortable assurance that long before that time science would have provided undreamt-of methods of sustenance. "Synthetic" was the blessed word of the age. In this very year it was soothing, perhaps a little prematurely, the alarms of the new industrial giant, the motor-car industry, about the world's supply of rubber ; it was announced at the meeting of the Chemical Industries Association that synthetic rubber could be produced on a commercial scale. Medicine and surgery were as tirelessly inventive in their own spheres. People were really in the mood to think that some day (and it might be even in their own day, so swift and sudden now were the final steps of any advance) human life would give itself almost indefinite prolongation. It was its impact upon this kind of mood that made the *Titanic* disaster so overwhelming. *Titanic* — the very name became sinister, with its suggestion of the fate of the colossally defiant.

Rubber and oil were the wild excitements of the Stock Markets in these years. Rubber more especially, because, terrific as was the pace at which modern manufacturing methods consumed any raw material, it became even more serious when an industry expanding so insatiably, and almost explosively, as the motor-car industry had done, depended upon a raw material which up to then had had so narrow a range of use that its supply had never needed to be developed beyond the unaided provision of nature. Now that such development became urgent it met with the awkward fact that the rubber-producing tree matures very slowly. The

market in rubber plantation shares was one of wildly fluctuating hopes and fears. Oil, upon which the industry equally depended, was a matter of less anxiety; there was little mistrust of the supply, and knowledge enough for the finding of new fields. That share market lay much more in the hands of big capital. The Weetman Pearson firm was this year upon great enterprises in Mexico and Central America, of which the public knew mainly because the chief Liberal Whip, the Master of Elibank, relinquished his political career to join them.

Wireless, which had already performed its new miracles of life-saving at sea, and was to perform them again in the *Volturmo* disaster of 1913, had failed to help the *Titanic*; the time had been too short. The word as yet carried none of its later significance; it meant only wireless telegraphy, and so far its only use as entertainment was for a few scientific people with a knowledge of Morse and other telegraphic systems, who amused themselves by picking up on private installations messages telegraphed from the wireless stations. Two forms of more sheer amusement which science was providing for mankind were making a curious way upwards through the strata of the great British public. The cinematograph, as a means of passing the afternoon or evening, was regarded as a cheap form of amusement, in every sense; educated people would watch for a few minutes, during some other entertainment, pictures of actual current events, and would discuss the educational possibilities of the invention; but there were no great cinematograph theatres as yet, and no elaborate programmes of tragedy and comedy. The action film was in the crude melodrama and knock-about period, and the photography, though less jerkily dazzling by now, dim and coarsely lighted. The business had not yet reached, so to speak, the legitimate theatre; it

was still barn-storming, housed in roller-skating rinks (that craze had passed) and obscure little halls, under the name of Electric Theatres, and regarded as an amusement for the poor. The gramophone had got a little further. One reason for this lies in the advertisement picture which just now became so familiar, the fox-terrier with his ear cocked to a gramophone trumpet listening to his master's voice. More recent generations would find it hard to believe that the tonal quality of a 1912 gramophone record was good enough to deceive even a fox-terrier. Yet in its day the picture was certainly justified; in comparison with the harsh metallic noises of the early gramophone these new H.M.V. records had a sweet and almost natural tone, which was bringing the gramophone for the first time into houses where it had hitherto been regarded as a tasteless amusement of the somewhat lower classes. But it was still considered rather eccentric to possess one otherwise than, so to speak, apologetically. More recent generations, again, would find it hard to believe that the motor-car industry in 1912 need have caused much anxiety about the supply of its raw materials. In fact, in this country the anxiety arose less from our own demand than from the effect upon it of the far more rapidly expanding American demand. We had as yet practically no cheap cars, save for one or two productions which were really motor-cycles on three or four wheels instead of two, but with little less noise and vibration. Familiar as motor-cars had become, they were still the vehicles of the rich or of professional people, like doctors, who could not now do without them. Anyone who wanted a cheap car had to run the gauntlet of the jests which pursued a Ford. The rest used the new vehicle only in the shape of motor-cabs and motor-buses. These latter, too, were mainly confined to London, and even there it had not dawned

upon the companies that the new mechanical propulsion could be used to extend enormously the range of the old horse-buses. The outer residential regions, to which, as the new Census figures showed, people were moving more and more, depended on the railways and tubes, which had just introduced an innovation for dealing with their traffic in the shape of the "escalator," the first moving staircase, at Earl's Court : a small one had been one of the amusements at the White City shortly before.

It can be seen that this was a world far too much interested in many things at once to have much patience with the desperate concentration of the suffragists upon one idea. The first effects of the militants' campaign against the community at large, instead of against politicians only, were beginning to show themselves. There had been two more days of window-smashing at the beginning of March, following a vigorous Anti-Suffrage meeting at the Albert Hall, at which several Cabinet Ministers were present, and the Prime Minister expressed his conviction that the grant of the vote to women would be "a grave political mistake." Open threats of the kind of deliberate damage which might now be expected led to the closing of the Old Masters Exhibition at Burlington House, and the closing also of the British Museum for several weeks ; such deprivations, and the suspicions under which any woman now fell who carried a muff or a handbag, if not very serious, were irritants. An article by an eminent specialist, Sir Almroth Wright, treating the militant extremists as "sexually embittered" or "epicene," drove them to fury. Foolishly flattered in their self-importance as they were by a police raid on the offices of the Women's Social and Political Union, they could scarcely profess to have advanced the cause when, on 28th March, their Bill, for the first time since the question had had political

reality, was defeated, and not in a small House, by 222 votes to 208. The best they could say was that they were clearing the issue, by forcing the half-hearted cumberers of their cause to come into the open as opponents; but this was unconvincing. The division was serious as a mark of a general drawing-back of public opinion. In *Punch* the older suffragist—who had figured there in the seventies and eighties of last century as an unattractive stalwart female—was now depicted reproaching with gracious good looks the militant on whom her ancient forbidding dowdiness had descended. That kind of presentation was, of course, absurd; the militant ranks were young in the main, well dressed, and by no means fierce to look at; plenty of them were ready to “dine and dance” at night. It was beginning to be one of the peculiar trials of a Member of Parliament that he never knew when or where he might meet a militant in the most deceitful clothing.

Indeed it was the common complaint of an older generation which had not yet given in to new pressures that one never knew who or what one might be called upon to meet anywhere. Socially there were such shocks as trafficking in badges of admission to the Royal Enclosure at Ascot; Lord Churchill this year had to apply for an injunction in Chancery against a lady for that offence. Most of the diversions of life also provided shocks. The theatre this year, as it happened, was no offender. It was mainly distinguished by Mr Granville Barker's Shakespeare productions, a brilliant compromise between the flamboyant old style of production and the drabness of the Elizabethan Stage Society; the entirely golden fairies of his *Midsummer's Night's Dream* were a vivid invention. All that the older generation had to deplore in this sphere was the passing of some of its own favourites—Florence St John, a sparkling



memory to men about town, and George Grossmith, following thus soon W. S. Gilbert, of whose comic operas he had been almost as essential a part in his day as the author and composer themselves. There was, however, a conflict of ideas in this sphere, though not necessarily between older and younger generations; it was the question of the censorship of plays. This had been for some time in agitation, and was one more of the many things which the advent of a Liberal Government had been expected to amend. Persistent raising of the point in the House by Mr Robert Harcourt, himself a writer of plays, had indeed led to the appointment of an experienced playwright to assist the official of the Household who decided these matters. But as the new assistant was principally known for his skill in the adaptation of risky French farces, the appointment had a certain air of cynicism. For the whole conflict had revolved upon the absurdity of banning from the stage any intellectual presentation of certain aspects of human conduct which romped there freely in farce and musical comedy.

Literature had more successfully liberated itself from old ideas of what should and should not be put into words. Violence of language, as in Mr Masfield's *The Widow in the Bye Street*, one of the long narrative poems which were the form of his work just now, or the subversive tendencies of Mr H. G. Wells's *Marriage*, also published this year, could now disturb only a rapidly decreasing number of people. But vague alarms about the general impact of modern literature upon the structure of society were strong enough to stand in the way of the Report of the Royal Commission on Divorce, which was published late in the year, recommending the admission of fresh grounds for divorce, such as incurable insanity or drunkenness, or desertion for three years.

All that could be called an outcry in literary matters

of the year—and it was but mild—concerned manners rather than morals on the publication in the supplementary volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* of Sir Sidney Lee's *Life of King Edward*. This contained passages about the relations between him and Queen Victoria which elderly repositories of the gossip of the Court seemed to think had better have been left to die with them. In general, however, the *Life* was welcomed as a justly admiring presentation of a King whose qualities had had later recognition than they deserved. Meanwhile, King George and Queen Mary, back from India early in February, were very graciously, if a trifle domestically, as some might feel, at the disposal of their subjects. One of their first public acts was the laying of the foundation stone of the new London County Hall on the south bank of the river opposite Westminster. It was no mere formal gesture, for the King and Queen had a real interest in the work of great town authorities, and especially, like King Edward before them,<sup>1</sup> in the efforts to improve housing—a matter in which the London County Council were just now very busy. Mr John Burns, turning his back on spectacular politics in a way which surprised those who could think only of his old Trafalgar Square days, and absorbing himself in the good dull work of local government, was putting his driving energy into the working of his Housing and Town Planning Act; in 1910 there had been an international conference on the subject in London, and the great name of Lord Kitchener had come in to help because of his interest at the moment in the making of the new Khartoum. The London authority was making a start upon the rebuilding of an area in Southwark possessed of a notoriety going back to the days of

<sup>1</sup> He had served in 1884, when Prince of Wales, as a member of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes; and he began that personal interest in the Duchy of Cornwall estates in London which his successors as Princes of Wales have steadily maintained.

Dickens, the Tabard Street area; and the King and Queen had taken an immense interest in the minutest details of the modern working man's flat. Two of the great pioneers of the crusade against the miseries and moral degradations of slum dwellings died this year—Miss Octavia Hill and General Booth. Miss Hill's whole life had been given to housing problems, and her fame cannot be better seen than in the fact that Berlin, the city in all Europe which attended most to such subjects, had established an "Octavia-Hill Verein." General Booth, by his book *In Darkest London* (the title itself was a challenge to people who had been eagerly reading Stanley's *In Darkest Africa*, and forgetting the horrors under their eyes), had, as his biographer puts it, "unroofed the slum to Victorian respectability." One impulse which most people had at his death was to be glad that he had lived so long. Fifteen or twenty years earlier he would have died without seeing his Salvation Army emerge from the obloquy which its frank loudness and emotionalism brought upon it, into the recognition that it was doing work which no other methods could achieve. He had that reward for thirty-four years of a "Generalship" narrow and harsh, no doubt, in mentality, but broad, intense and genuine in feeling. It was not altogether a small matter that a touch of Jewish blood had made him exactly what people would expect a devouring Old Testament prophet to look like.

After a visit to Henley Regatta—which gave an unexpected day of life to the old Royal barge and displayed the professionals of the water-side in the unfamiliar glories of the Royal bargemen's costume—and a vast garden-party at Windsor—the guests for which filled no less than eleven special trains—the King and Queen carried their interest in housing to other parts of the country. In South Wales they took tea with a miner's wife. And during a visit to Yorkshire they saw much of

mining and manufacturing home-life : it befell them to see it at its greyest, for while they were there an explosion at the Cadeby colliery killed thirty men, followed by a second, which killed fifty of a rescue-party. It looked as if the new Sovereigns meant to mark their reign by a new knowledge of the lives of their people ; and the entry of the Prince of Wales at Magdalen College, Oxford, in the autumn, not in the isolation which had hedged about his grandfather at Christ Church, but as an ordinary undergraduate, was thoroughly "in the picture"—a picture markedly different from that of the German Emperor's odd semi-paternal visit this year to the great Krupp munition works.

There was policy in all this too, for who could tell what kindness of purpose might not be called upon to play its part very soon ? The political year was thoroughly turbulent. The Home Rule Bill and the Welsh Disestablishment Bill were both in being. The former, introduced on 11th April, gave Ireland a Senate and a House of Commons, reserving certain subjects of legislation and taxation to the Imperial Parliament, but making provision for a possible larger transference of powers later on. However, later events have removed all importance from the details of this Bill. The Welsh Bill, introduced on 23rd April, based the disendowment provisions largely on a distinction between ancient revenues and the Church's acquisitions in more controversial centuries ; it provided revenue of £180,000 a year for the Disestablished Church, allotting the remainder of the endowments to educational and other purposes. Both of the Bills went into acrimonious and often noisy debate ; the Welsh Bill rather unexpectedly produced more personal recriminations than the other, Mr Lloyd George reminding the Cecils that their own origins as a powerful family made them poor opponents of a diversion of Church property, and much play being

made with the spectacle of Mr F. E. Smith, who moved the rejection of the Bill, as the champion of "the soul of the Christian peoples of the world."

There were again some changes in the Ministry. Lord Loreburn resigned on grounds of health, and Lord Haldane became Lord Chancellor, Colonel Seely succeeding him at the War Office, where the Haldane reorganisations—the Expeditionary Force, the Territorial Army and the Officers Training Corps—were by now well established. Lord Loreburn had, for the past year or two, been the object of some of the disaffection in the party. Among the many results of the long exclusion of the Liberals from power had been the overwhelmingly Tory colour of the benches of magistrates; and, as in so many other directions since 1906, there had been a far too facile impatience for remedy. Lord Loreburn had consistently held out against pressure: he set up, after a Report from a Select Committee, advisory committees to act with the Lords Lieutenant of counties in bringing forward names for appointment to the benches; he refused to override their work by direct appointment of known Liberals, since this would have fastened upon the benches of magistrates that very habit of party feeling which Liberals were holding up to reprobation.

Before the Second Reading debates on the two big Bills were finished the thin crust of peace over the seethings of industry was broken again with a transport workers' strike. Like their allied industry, the railwaymen, they were out for the full recognition of the union's power. Hours and rates of pay, and the hampering by some employers of the settlement of the previous year, were the specific grievances; but the real struggle was over the demand that the possession of the Transport Workers' Federation "ticket" should be invariably a condition of employment. Though the men professed themselves willing to waive this point when arbitration

was offered by the Government on the other points, the employers were so sure that the "ticket" battle was the real one that they were very slow to meet the arbitration offer themselves. The result was the development of the most openly angry conviction which had yet shown itself that the masters were determined to "smash" the men. That feeling was lurking now in all strikes, but in the London strike (the hope that it would spread to other ports had not been fulfilled) it stood out sharply, because it was concentrated on one man: Lord Devonport's powerful personality virtually *was* the Port of London Authority. He was taking an exceedingly stiff line against all efforts at conciliation; and he drew the lightning to such an extent that Ben Tillett got a big meeting of strikers on Tower Hill to repeat after him: "Oh, God, strike Lord Devonport dead." After scenes of the violence now usual, in fights with blacklegs and with the police, the strike ended inconclusively early in August, just when the Bill dealing with the Osborne judgment was in its final stages. The political use of union funds was allowed; but the liberty of the individual was guarded by provisions that a ballot of members must first approve such use, that the political fund must be kept separate, and that any member could claim exemption from contribution to the fund without losing the other benefits of the union. The Opposition gave the Bill little trouble, but on the other hand Labour gave it little support. One reason was that the hardening of employers against the unions had made Labour leaders far less willing than they had been immediately after the judgment to yield any inch of their position. Also at the time they expected far more trouble from these provisions than actually resulted; in fact it was to be held some twelve years later that for various reasons of complexity of procedure and the invidiousness of this "contracting out" the individual

had received no adequate protection. But the apprehensions of difficulty were enough to stimulate a little further the uneasiness of relations between Liberalism and Labour.

The truth was that, although Unionists were fond of representing the Government as helplessly driven along by their two supporting groups, the Irish and the Labour members, the latter knew very well that they had little real effectiveness. For if the Ministry was in some sense dependent on them, they were much more dependent on it, since to defeat it, or allow it to be defeated, would be to destroy what chance they had of influencing the course of events. Consciousness of this was partly the strength of the growing movement for "direct action" among the extremists, which had got Tom Mann sentenced to imprisonment at the Manchester Assizes in March for an article in *The Syndicalist* inciting the armed forces to mutiny. That kind of thing in its turn was alienating Liberals: there was a debate in the Commons about *The Syndicalist* and its provocations; and the by-election at Hanley in July, when a seat vacated by the death of so prominent a Labour leader as Mr Enoch Edwards went to a Liberal, with the Labour candidate badly at the bottom of a three-cornered poll, was an uncomfortable indication of what was happening. The new life in the Labour movement was wearing very thin the association with Liberalism; and it had now a newspaper, *The Daily Herald*, first published as a daily on 16th April of this year, of which the entire policy was to make Labour a self-sufficient independent force.

Mr Tillet's leading of the London strike meeting in a "prayer" probably had been suggested to him by Sir Edward Carson's action at a great Unionist demonstration in Belfast when, after a march past of eighty thousand men, he bade the meeting repeat after him:

"We will never in any circumstances submit to Home Rule." His example was being used, too, by the militant suffragists as defence for their actions; if Front Bench politicians were publicly making arrangements to defy the law without being prosecuted, why should women go to prison for defying it? Mr and Mrs Pethick Lawrence and Mrs Pankhurst had taken this line in their trial at the Old Bailey in May, when they were sentenced to nine months in the second division for conspiracy. That trial had arisen out of more window-breaking raids and firing of the contents of pillar-boxes. There were threats of other forms of property destruction: two women found in the grounds of Nuneham, the country seat of Mr Lewis Harcourt, one of the Cabinet opponents of Women's Suffrage, were suspected of intentions of arson; and on the night before Mr Asquith was to speak in a theatre in Dublin there had been an attempt to burn down the place. While the Home Secretary was being attacked for failure to keep order, the militants were sharpening a weapon that was to add enormously to the complications of his position. A big hunger-strike had been started by the women undergoing sentence at Aylesbury, and the forcible feeding to which the prison authorities resorted was making unpleasant reading, and almost driving into sympathy a great many women who had no liking at all for these doings. Yet the stiffening, on the whole, of opinion against the suffrage movement because of the excesses had another proof towards the end of the year. Mr George Lansbury, a Labour member, resigned his seat for Bow and Bromley deliberately in order to provide a test case for Women's Suffrage; he was handsomely defeated in his own citadel, his Unionist and anti-suffrage opponent winning the seat by 4042 votes to 3291.

All the while tempers heated over the Insurance Act



kept open another wide area of threats to break the law. Domestic servants were organised to demonstrate, like their mistresses, at the Albert Hall; the doctors were still pledged to complete refusal of their services. Mr Lloyd George, freer this year from the House of Commons than he had been for some time past (he was, of course, prominent in the Welsh Church debates, but was not in charge of the Bill), held confidently on his way. He kept on asserting that the Act would come into operation with far less trouble than its opponents chose to think, that the actual disobedience would be out of all proportion to the oceans of turgid talk, and that the magistrates were not really going to be very busy with delinquent mistresses. In that he proved to be right; the Act came fairly quietly into force in July, without many prosecutions. But his satisfaction was not as complete as it sounded; he knew that he was not over the worst of his fences, and that when he came to it, it might be, after all, to find the one he was apparently over rebuilt in a new place. The process of insurance began on 1st July; the title to medical benefits would begin only at the New Year of 1913, the intervening six months establishing the fund. This meant that the crisis with the doctors had yet to come; and the comparative collapse of all the opposition of domestic employers to the Act was largely traceable to their belief that, when that crisis came, the Act would break down far more hopelessly than by any disobedience of theirs. Not only would it be reduced to a dead letter; but all the discontent about deduction from wages would rise to a formidable height, if it appeared that the contributors had endured it for six months, to find none of the promises fulfilled. Even Mr Lloyd George could hardly keep the mass of workers behind the Act in face of such a failure to "deliver the goods."

So the militancy in that affair had not really faded;

it had only shifted its ground, and was waiting. Militancy in the Irish question grew more open. "Ulster Day," 28th September, saw the immense signing of the Ulster Covenant, to obey no laws and to pay no taxes imposed by a Parliament at Dublin; it was followed by inspections and reviews of forces. They were armed as yet in the open only with dummy rifles; but it was known that these were not the only weapons in the country, and the satirical comments on "General Carson" and "Galloper Smith" (the two were constantly together) masked but imperfectly a very real anxiety.

The anxiety was not only on the Liberal side. There were many Conservatives who disliked the open threat of rebellion, and would rather, in any case, not have seen Mr F. E. Smith in it. The last thing the party wanted was any new possibility of division of opinion. It had strengthened its organisation in the summer by amalgamating the two wings of party machinery, Conservative and Unionist, which had all this time been kept separate; this piece of work first made Mr Steel-Maitland's reputation. But better machinery was not going to help a party disagreed as to one of its most important uses; the long dispute was still in progress between the "whole hog" protectionists and those who were convinced that taxes on food must be dropped before they could ever hope for a majority again. Sparks of the dispute flew round the fiasco of an attempt in the autumn to raise funds for Tariff Reform propaganda as a celebration of Mr Chamberlain's birthday; this dissolved in a ridicule it did not deserve when it was announced, without a gleam of humour, that donors of £1000 would have the privilege of an invitation to dinner with the Duke of Westminster at Grosvenor House.

It was in any case poor tactics to suggest that that

side had its eye on Park Lane when the other side was so successfully keeping its eye on the workshop and kitchen, and even on the seats upon the Embankment. Mr John Burns announced at the end of the year his scheme for dealing with the homeless people there. He knew London well, and used often to be seen on the Embankment late at night. His scheme was thoroughly practical. There was a great deal of shelter available for the homeless, but no easily working channel between the two. By instituting a system of distribution of tickets for shelter Mr Burns was able to state, perhaps a little optimistically, that the Embankment had been cleared.

The Opposition was in no way out of fighting form when, on the resumption of the session, they returned to the Irish and Welsh Bills. They managed to make a stir by catching the Government majority napping one afternoon; Sir Frederick Banbury moved an un-announced amendment to the financial resolution on the Home Rule Bill, and by suddenly refraining from further speeches on it at an early stage in the afternoon, before the Government benches had awakened to the need for carrying on the debate, they got a snap division which defeated the Government by 228 to 206. Mr Asquith, imperturbable, was not of course going to resign; but the necessary sequel, a rescission of the amendment, was so unusual a step, and in the case of that important part of a Bill so complicated, that when it took place, two days later, the Opposition once more by disturbance forced the Speaker to adjourn the House. One of their leading newspapers was urging them to a prolonged campaign of disorder, and there was much noisy and abusive debating of the guillotine time-table for the two Bills; but behind it all was the consciousness that in the country at large "the burning question of Home Rule," as another of their papers observed, "would not

burn." The very thing which, constitutionally speaking, ought to have made it burn—the fact that it was practically bound to become law under the Parliament Act—was the very thing that made the whole business too mechanical to interest the ordinary man. He went on singing *Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay* (though this performance of the young George Grossmith was a poorish echo of *Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay*) with a general sense that life was anyhow rather exciting.

## CHAPTER IV

1913—JULY 1914 : THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

EARLY in the next year, on 10th February, came news which, like the loss of the *Titanic*, had power to hush all else—the news, so long awaited, of Captain Scott's South Pole expedition. The ship which should have re-embarked his party on its return from the dash for the Pole had brought back only the vision which now burned itself into the mind of the whole world—the little tent in the appalling loneliness of snow where eyes and lips frozen in death waited to send their message to England. Caught by frightful weather on the return journey the party had, by a bitterly small margin of space, just failed to struggle on to the provision base which would have saved them, the last before they would have reached the coast again. In full consciousness of this they had faced death in "one noble temper of heroic minds." Two of the party had died earlier, and the account of their deaths, told in the diary found in the tent, added to the greatness of it all. One man, Bowers, a seaman, had literally worn himself out rather than surrender; the other, Captain Oates, reaching a point where he could have gone on only by taxing the strength of the others, had gone deliberately out of the shelter tent one night, to die in the pitiless storm. Not even their triumph in reaching the Pole had been unalloyed. They found there evidence that Amundsen had been before them, and that they had not won for their country the untouched glory they had hoped for. Captain Scott's diaries were ample enough to

give an almost terribly intimate knowledge of the grim struggle south and north again, of the gallantry and gaiety that were now heart-rending. The cinematograph added a poignancy of its own ; no written words could have had upon the mind the effect of the actual picture of the polar party as they left the rest for the final dash—the dogged trudging figures with their sledges moving so confidently away across the blank interminable snows into the dimness which slowly blotted them from view. To see them live again with their fate upon them was almost more than could be borne. The story was not, and it never can be, a story of failure ; it remains one of the perfectly flawless flamings of the human spirit.

That had need to burn bright and high somewhere. In most directions it showed but a smoky and turbid flame. No mere description of events can give a true account of English history during the next eighteen months. The events were serious enough, the problems they presented were inextricably baffling. But far more serious was the country's state of mind. In one way after another all the old loyalties, the old values, even such standards of behaviour as still survived, gave way. The more difficulties there were to meet the more it appeared that habits of conduct to which appeal could once have been made were no longer there to appeal to. At the moment when the wage-earner was most restless and discontented, the wealthy were most careless and ostentatious. At the moment when government by an elected majority was being most challenged, politicians were floundering perilously near a morass of disingenuousness and disrepute. And all the while so many problems of government and administration were being hustled along in a despairingly empirical fashion that public affairs became rather like a herd of nervous animals jostling one another down a lane of which the

walls were remorselessly closing in. People began to think fatalistically that only an open smash somewhere could clear the road. This was not only because three specific questions—the Irish problem, Women's Suffrage, and aggressive Trade Unionism — were heading for deadlock ; they were but the detonators.

The deep sense of conflict had its roots in the two elections of 1910, not in the sweeping electoral change of December 1905, in spite of its more obviously disturbing appearance. For, as has been said, that could be regarded as in some degree a freak, and not beyond explanation. The voter had been stampeded. But the elections of 1910 bore a much more sinister complexion for the Conservative interests. Twice, in none of the wild heat of 1905, they had been defeated, and no one could feel sure that this did not indicate that the mass electorate, which had not hitherto greatly upset party calculations, was definitely taking shape as, by whatever fluctuating margin, a majority against Conservatism. Earlier generations had perhaps flattered themselves too soon that the famous "leap in the dark" had landed them after all in no very strange regions. It now began to appear that those generations had never landed at all ; the leap had begun, but not ended. They had been in the air all the time, and only now were parties really landing upon a fully wakened and conscious wage-earning vote. Was this to mean the end of the old alternating hold of two parties ?

So it came about that at the very moment when the structure of representative government was being undermined both by Labour movements, which found it too deeply bonded in to the economic structure they were attacking, and by the Women's Suffrage movement, which was discovering how elusive an opponent, just by reason of its very openness, a representative system can be, one of the great political parties was questioning

Parliamentary authority. There grew up among those to whom the forms of government and order should have been of most concern a feeling that the country needed a lesson, and was asking for it. The more intolerant and obstinate part of the world of vested interests meant to give it a lesson in the resources of the capitalist system. The Opposition in Parliament meant to give it a lesson on the futility of supposing that there was no limit to the power of the polling booth. In each case militant Labour and militant suffragists had exactly parallel lessons in view. In every case the lesson was to be that force, in the last resort, remained.

Not the least of the perils was that Parliamentary government itself should slip into this atmosphere of force, and so fail of its service to civilisation. For in this way even those who were averse to physical force were falling unwisely into the temper of it. The danger lay not only in the recurrence of violent scenes in the House, but in the justification alleged for them—the plea that the Government's recent work and its use of its majority were reducing legislative methods to a farce, so that, with a muzzled House of Lords and limitation of debate in the Commons, no activity was left to an Opposition other than outbursts of disorder, alternating with marked and studied indifference to Bills under a "bullying" time-table. To display the elected majority as governing by force was now the line of the Opposition, together with seizing upon anything that could be attacked as a sign of the muddle and haste produced by such overbearing law-making. The affectation of indifference was to the fore mainly in the debates on the Irish and Welsh Bills, still in full swing in the beginning of the year; for the session could not be prorogued by a Government intending to work the Parliament Act until these Bills had, for the first of the three necessary



times, passed the House of Commons, and the heavy programme of the past year had driven the passing of them late. The Home Rule Bill got its third reading by 367 to 257 on 16th January. What efforts there were to amend the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, still in Committee, came mainly from Liberals. There were good churchmen on those benches—Mr Gladstone's own grandson among them by now—who without contesting the principle of disestablishment found much to criticise in detail. The Bill was, as the Home Rule Bill had been, slightly amended; but, in the main, party divisions had their way, and on the evening of 5th February a most unusual sound of melody in the lobbies announced that it too had achieved its third reading: Welsh members were singing "Land of my Fathers." Both Bills underwent immediate rejection by the Lords.

Meanwhile the Insurance Act had been steered past its last dangers of open wreck. The Opposition made play with some charges of muddle and haste. There had been cases of delay in treatment, mistaken diagnosis, errors of prescription or dispensing, some of which had proved fatal. Such things were inevitable at the start of so large a scheme (14,000,000 persons were now insured, and only 5,000,000 had had claims to such treatment before) and in the overpressure of routine work which it entailed. The great thing was that the Act was working. In the last few months the hostility of the doctors had weakened. Mr Lloyd George had met their demands by some concessions; and though the British Medical Association officially held out to the end of 1912 for its full requirements there were signs of disunion. Whereas 27,400 of the profession had signed the original pledge of 1911 to refuse to work the Act, only some 13,000 voted in a ballot in December 1912 on the questions still in negotiation with Mr Lloyd George. The fact was that general practitioners, concerned for

their "club practices," were beginning to see themselves as dragged along by the heads of the profession, who were far above such humble considerations, in a warfare which was as much political as professional, and were beginning to doubt if they could afford the luxury. All through the controversy the leaders had shown a good deal of ignorance of their less famous brethren's habits. They had fulminated about the indignity of contract terms for their services, when all the time practitioners in poor quarters and manufacturing districts had drawn a great part of their income, and much the steadiest part, from contracts with the friendly societies and trade unions. Thus again Mr Lloyd George's confidence in his Act triumphed. Just as the cards had for months now been quietly stamped, so the panels of doctors were quietly filling; in January 1913 the British Medical Association released from their undertakings all who had signed the original pledge. Mr Lloyd George was entitled to his pæans. He had added to Old Age Pensions and his Budget of 1909 an immense piece of social reform, of which many had talked, but which owed quite as much now to his tireless energy, his quick mind, and his buoyant countering of opposition, as to the patient advocacy of others before him. It could, indeed, be said that he was the member of the Cabinet who aroused the bitterest hostility, the most open maker of "class" appeals, so that in other hands the Insurance Scheme might have had to confront less difficulty. But the share of his personality in the feeling against the measure can easily be exaggerated; and it is certain that no Minister could have brought it through so successfully, except Mr Asquith, and perhaps Mr Winston Churchill.

Mr Churchill was occupied with matters which, if they lent themselves not at all to pæans, were worth the reach of high ambition. For the work of his Department, the Admiralty, was at the very core of our relations with

Germany. Here again the public mind, when it looked in the direction of foreign affairs at all, was drifting into a kind of fatalism. It had complicated with spasmodic outbursts of interest, as it always does in foreign affairs, the efforts of statesmen. The attempt of Lord Tweedmouth in 1908, taken up again by Mr Churchill, to find some basis for a truce in naval armaments, had been interrupted by the periodical exaggeration into newspaper "stunts" of normal party exchanges on the Estimates, as well as by really critical events like the Agadir affair. When that died down, the public had been ready in 1912 to listen again to talk of a "naval holiday"; but only because it thought that the peaceful issue of the crisis might mean that Germany, after all, "knew her place" in naval affairs, and that therefore we could afford to talk of a truce. Not, however, except upon that condition; and the public was growing less sure that the condition was being observed. It had become more mistrustful when the news that Lord Haldane, who knew more of Germany than any other member of the Cabinet, was visiting Berlin, and the less widely spread knowledge that Sir Ernest Cassel too had gone there, were followed by no further information, either good or bad. No mood could have done better for Mr Churchill in the difficult path he had now to tread. He needed a public opinion not alarmed but on its guard. For he had the authentic German naval programme in his pocket, and he had to act upon convictions which could not be avoided, and yet could not be made public. He could not openly say that the enormous increase in personnel which the German Navy Law was providing, and which would commission fully a number of ships ostensibly inactive, made quite hollow the unaggressive professions with which Germany kept inside her published shipbuilding programme. But he had to act on that knowledge, and the public mood was

what he wanted. His task was no less essential to these years than the more lime-lighted work of Mr Lloyd George. It was not his fault if, following superficially the Estimates of 1912, 1913 and 1914, for which he had to hold out so strenuously in the Cabinet, with their increasing impression of strength, speed and efficiency—hulls with power in every line, bigger guns, oil fuel and the rest—the country drifted into fatalistic acceptance of a struggle for sheer superior force after all.

This was the main subject now in the Cabinet, for after the overfull programmes of the last four or five years the Government set forth a very light one for the House, when it returned from a brief prorogation in March to the new session. The light programme, however, landed the Ministry in another difficulty: it cleared the way for recurring discussion of the suffrage *impasse*, which grew worse and worse. As if by a perverse fate every year now provided a fresh exasperation of temper; and before the prorogation something had happened which seemed more perverse than ever, in that an attempted solution, which looked like a way out of the extraordinary maze, was “torpedoed” at the start. There had been in these years, as has already been said, a three-fold difficulty: first, the terms of any Bill alienated some supporters, yet to invite free amendment was to render its passage most unlikely; secondly, a divided Cabinet could not take up a Suffrage Bill; and thirdly, there was a genuine feeling in the House, however insincere the suffragists might choose to think it, that the franchise system needed more than a simple extension to women; based on definitions of a past day, it was disfranchising a great many men. There was, therefore, every appearance of an ingenious piece of tactics at last, when the announcement was made that the whole suffrage question was to come up on a Franchise and Registration Bill. For this, besides

opening the door to the passage of amendments enfranchising women coincidently with the clearing away of various disqualifications of men, also saved the face of the Government in the matter of securing its passage. They could not take up a Women's Suffrage Bill; but they need not drop a Registration Bill of their own because it had absorbed women's suffrage on the way. They were not, however, to be allowed to "get away with it." Anti-suffragists raised, not without justification, the point that a Bill so profoundly amended would become in fact a different Bill, and must in the procedure of the House be reintroduced in its proper form. After a day or two's consideration the Speaker announced that, in the event of such amendment taking place, he would certainly rule in the sense of the point raised.

*There is no need to jump, as the militants did, to the conclusion that the whole plan had been nothing but an elaborate trick. The Government stood to gain nothing by tricking suffragists: it was already deep enough in their disfavour. Private members were much more likely to have intended a genuine, if blundering, way out of their dilemma than a piece of chicanery. But the militants cannot be wholly blamed for their attitude. They had become convinced that much of the acquiescence in their demands of candidates at elections was mere lip-service to escape their hostility at public meetings; they deeply mistrusted the divisions on their Bills of late years, for one-third of the House was generally absent. They took this latest incident as an indication that talk of support for their claims as part of a general franchise reform was another shuffle, like the criticism of their direct Bills as either too democratic or not democratic enough. And since direct Bills were now thrown out, the end of the attempt at an indirect method undoubtedly looked like final refusal. Before Parliament was prorogued their war upon society at*

large had opened out. Another burst of window-breaking was followed rapidly by serious pillar-box outrages (they had discovered what phosphorus compounds could do), the partial destruction by a bomb of a house in building for Mr Lloyd George at Walton Heath, the burning of two or three railway stations near London, systematic ruining of golf greens, and the cutting of telegraph and telephone wires.

The last straw in the complication of the question during the new session was the hunger-strike. The Home Secretary had to stand a baffling cross-fire of criticism. On the one side were the insistent demands that he should keep order ; on the other a rising protest, by no means confined to supporters of the suffragists, against the revolting brutalities (and it could not, with the best will in the world, be other than brutal) of forcible feeding. Yet the only alternative to forcible feeding was release from prison ; and that meant impotence of punishment. The law was being broken, and then broke in the hands of its guardians. Mr McKenna, unable to get out of this cleft stick, tried to make it at least nip the militants as well. He introduced a Bill giving him powers to liberate prisoners on licence while of good conduct ; he was thus enabled to put released militants back in gaol on further offence without the bother of trial, and yet to escape forcibly feeding them by turning them outside again when that step would have become necessary. A few more outrages of bombing and arson hastened its passage ; it was put through all its stages in the House of Lords on one day, and became law on 25th April. But the famous " Cat and Mouse " Act might almost as well have been called the " Squirrel in the Cage " Act, for it left the Home Secretary pattering round and round in an alternation of imprisonment and release which hardly seemed to check the movement. Burning of houses and stations and race-course grand

stands went on, and no one knew how long only empty buildings would be fired. It might be charitably thought that the bad clockwork of a bomb found under the Bishop's throne in St Paul's and of one sent to the Bow Street magistrate indicated intention that the things should not explode, but that again might be a restraint which would soon break down. In the shattering of nerves and health which hunger-striking and "cat and mouse" imprisonment must be producing, the brink of assassination might any day be passed. How near that desperation might be was only too forcibly suggested by the miserable incident of this year's Derby Day, when a militant who had been more than once in prison dashed out on to the course in front of the horses as they poured round Tattenham Corner, and was so crushed that she died within a few hours.

Through all this the Government had at least some sympathy; people, even if they were impatient, could be fair enough at times to see what the difficulties were. It was now to find itself exposed in a far less excusable muddle. Towards the end of 1912 two awkward questions had arisen. One concerned a heavy purchase of silver by the Indian Government in operations for the exchange value of the rupee. The purchase had been conducted entirely through a single firm, Samuel Montagu & Sons; a member of the Montagu family was Under-Secretary for India, and an active partner of the firm was Liberal member for a London constituency. However, in this affair explanations were not difficult to accept. Both the extent of the Indian Government's purchase—six million pounds sterling—and its urgent character had dictated quiet operations through a single firm rather than open-market operations which would inevitably have forced up the price of silver. Mr E. S. Montagu, the Under-Secretary, had no business connection with the firm at all; and neither

his official position nor Sir Stuart Samuel's membership of the House could be said to have brought any "inside knowledge" into the transaction, since the Indian Government itself was giving all the inside knowledge. The suggestion dwindled, then, to one of favouritism in the choice of the firm for the operation, and even that could not be seriously sustained in view of this firm's long association with the Indian Government.

But this reminder that political integrity cannot be too sensitive was seen against a background of other disturbing rumours which early in 1913 became more widely current. The Government had concluded with the Marconi Company an agreement for the erection of an Imperial chain of wireless stations. There had been some jealous rivalry between competing wireless systems, and this gave sinister point to vague hints that members of the Government had been speculating in Marconi shares. At last a French newspaper, *Le Matin*, used names; and Sir Rufus Isaacs, the Attorney-General (whose brother was a member of the Stock Exchange), and the Postmaster-General, Mr Herbert Samuel, brought a libel action. It came on in the end only as an application for costs, the newspaper having already withdrawn its charges and apologised, on proof that the shares dealt in were shares in the American Marconi Company and that the dealings, therefore, had not had the impropriety of being a speculation on inside information before the agreement with the Government was generally known. If that agreement had at all affected the American shares it had done so openly, in a manner of which any individual could take advantage. But the affair could not rest there. For one thing, other names were involved in rumour; for another, the rumours and the rivalries together were casting shadows on the honesty of the agreement; and altogether it was a case for investigation by a Select Committee. The Committee



soon found that it had to divide its work. One part of its reference, that concerning the agreement, was highly technical; it involved questions of the comparative efficiency of various wireless inventions and systems, and the validity of patents which the Marconi firm was undertaking to operate; there had for some time been dispute on this point between Mr Marconi and other inventors, especially M. Poulsen. This investigation was delegated to a sub-committee presided over by a judge of the High Court expert in patent litigation; all that need be said of its work is that, after the Marconi Company had vented, so to speak, a tiff with the British public by talking of repudiating the agreement, the report pronounced for the Company and established the honesty of the primary transaction.

The inquiry into the conduct of Ministers, thus left isolated, was followed by the public with far more interest, especially as it gradually came out that not only Sir Rufus Isaacs and the Postmaster-General, but the late Chief Whip of the party, the Master of Elibank, and the democratic anti-capitalist Chancellor of the Exchequer himself were implicated. The Government unpardonably aggravated a situation in any case awkward enough. Having received from the Ministers concerned, quite early in the stage of rumours, their explanations, and accepting the excuse that the shares in question were in the American Company, the Prime Minister had agreed to the plea that no serious charge could lie against their integrity. With the pressure of the Home Rule and Welsh Bills upon them, and Mr Lloyd George still deep in securing the free course of the Insurance Act, the Ministry had far too easily decided that the trouble would die down. They had not seen that the wise course would have been to challenge the rumours at once with a Select Committee. Now, with the truth apparently dragged out of a Ministry

which had apparently hoped to conceal it, they frankly admitted their mistake. Their excuses were good enough, no doubt ; but they were landed in a very unpleasant muddle.

They were lucky that it was no more than that. The Committee was divided, a minority report going so far as to speak of "grave impropriety." But fortunately for Ministers it *was* a majority which reported in terms of exoneration. There followed a debate in the House ; the Postmaster-General had been cleared, and the Master of Elibank was abroad, but Sir Rufus Isaacs and Mr Lloyd George made their statements and withdrew. They were sensible enough to speak in complete humility, and the Prime Minister made no effort to minimise the lack of wisdom only too visible throughout the affair. The debate finally turned on the question whether the House should express its regret at the conduct of Ministers, the form of the Opposition motion, (in which case Sir Rufus Isaacs and Mr Lloyd George would have resigned), or should accept the Ministers' expressions of regret, the form of a Liberal amendment. The latter won by 346 to 268, and technically the situation was saved. The Chancellor of the Exchequer remained in his post ; the Attorney-General only left his to become in the following October Lord Chief Justice. But Liberals and Labour could be more forgiving with their votes than with their thoughts.

The historian may well ask whether the most serious aspect of the whole affair was not that it was so little serious. In the House itself perhaps Mr Balfour's question—"What would Mr Gladstone have thought of a Chancellor of the Exchequer engaging in private operations on the Stock Exchange?"—may have had some reality ; outside it was hardly more than rhetorical. Thirty years earlier, no matter how satisfactorily the strict letter of the rules of integrity had been kept,

no matter what saving distinctions might be drawn between English and American shares, Ministers who had so involved themselves might well have had to leave public life altogether; now they need not even leave a Government. A world sitting loose to most things except its amusements and the means of commanding them could not expect that. Nor could a world which opened its drawing-rooms and gave dinner-parties mainly to throw a wide net for financiers with Stock Exchange "tips" really profess to be shocked. The trouble was not that of voices crying in the wilderness, but of voices crying in the very heart of Jerusalem; there a whip of small cords is required. Lord Roberts was, indeed, doing his best to use one at the moment in an energetic campaign for some form of national service.

This movement rather entangled for a short time the progress of another movement which had had an amazing success, Sir Robert Baden Powell's Boy Scouts. They were an extraordinarily happy idea. Sir Robert, by his picturesque defence of Mafeking in 1899, and by his reputation for craft in game-tracking, and all the lore of jungle and wild, had captured the imagination of boyhood all over the country; he had become a kind of hero of open-air cunning and wise dodges. By a stroke of real genius he turned all this into a channel which was to give to thousands of boys in dreary towns and dull industrial quarters and mean streets a vivid interest in their lives, a pride in handy usefulness, and hours—days and weeks, with luck—of fresh air, the countryside, and camping. He knew exactly how to hit the imagination of boys with his organisation of patrols and totems, the uniform of loose shirt and shorts, with just the right romantic touches of broad-brimmed hat and jack-knife slung at the belt, and with badges for proficiency in all the arts of camp-life. Not

the least part of it was that in classes and practice so much scout-life could go on in winter, and keep boys keen. The movement spread very rapidly, and managed to keep its influence for self-respect and cleanliness and health from becoming boring. In time girls grew so envious of it that they had to have their own form of it, Girl Guides. Because Sir Robert had been a soldier, and because patrol organisation carried with it some necessary drill, there were over-scrupulous people who suspected it of being a surreptitious means of edging the nation towards compulsory national service. But that prejudice never did the movement much harm. It was soon spreading to other nations.

What now hampered Lord Roberts was less the counter-movement for peaceful gestures in our foreign relations than the bland existence of young men with their hair long and smoothly plastered back, their feet devoted to the new and thrilling intricacies of the tango or the gaieties of the turkey trot (there was a new dance every year; it had been the bunny hug in 1912) and their heads buzzing with rag-time music, which was the latest discovery. Money, for those who had it at all, was only too plentiful; and in these years old families which had been a little left behind in the race for it were tapping a new source. These were the years in which prices for famous pictures first began to touch figures that seemed fantastic. There had been much talk in 1911 of offers of £100,000 to Lord Lansdowne for a Rembrandt; in 1912 Lord Feversham had sold one to a New York purchaser for £50,000; now in 1913 a Romney fetched £41,570, a Gainsborough £19,200, and a single day's sale at Christie's reached a total—a record at that time—of £120,000. For those who were inclined to be depressed this was merely one more ground for depression. We were doing badly at the Olympic Games; we could not play polo as well as the

Americans, or at least could not afford so many ponies ; their boys could beat our hardened professionals at golf (Ouimet had been defeating Vardon and Ray) ; and now they were opening purses with which we could not compete to remove our art treasures. Lord Curzon had saved the Tattershall fireplaces, but then he had married American millions. It was all very sad, and all more than likely the Liberals' fault.

Even St Paul's Cathedral began to fail us. In June a report was published by Sir Francis Fox, conveying alarming intimations about the cracking of pillars and insecurity of the dome ; the inclination at the time was to attribute the damage to the making of tubes and underground railways, which, by draining off water, had disturbed the strata upon which the foundations rested. People began to wonder whether the £90,000 which had just been subscribed to secure the Crystal Palace for the nation had not better have waited for this purpose. Much money had also just been spent on the reconstruction of the façade of Buckingham Palace, which was completed this year, when the King entertained at a restaurant the five hundred workmen engaged on the job. The exasperating element in this business was that the old dingy front of the Palace, which was now felt to be a quite impossible background for the new Mall and the Victoria Memorial, need never have become so dingy if the Prince Consort, in his enthusiasm for modern invention, had not had the front treated with a patent substance for preserving the stone, which also proved to have a dismal capacity for preserving London dirt.

The King and Queen had again been making friendly visits to their people. In April they had been at the great railway works at Crewe, and had gone on to see the towns of the Potteries ; in July they spent a week in Lancashire, where their visit coincided with a curious

industrial portent, a strike of agricultural labourers, who had been regarded as helplessly outside militant unionism. The ceremonial occasion of the year in London was the reopening of the Chapel of the Order of the Bath in its ancient but long-disused surroundings, Henry VII.'s chapel in Westminster Abbey. Little could be made of a visit the King and Queen paid in May to Berlin. Formally the occasion was one of reconciliation. A probable abandonment of the long feud between the House of Cumberland, reigning in Hanover, and the Hohenzollern dynasty had been rumoured in 1910; and now was to be made actual by the marriage of the German Emperor's only daughter to Prince Ernest Augustus of Cumberland. This might be styled rather pompously a reconciliation of Hohenzollern and Guelph; but its message to the Guelph House of Great Britain seemed to be, if anything, an intimation of German solidarity.

International nervousness had been taking a new turn. There were still espionage cases on both sides; this year the new uneasiness in England was about mysterious sounds of aircraft over the land at night. The earliest reports of this kind of thing had been in October 1912, when during a heavy fog people at Sheerness had been convinced that they had heard an airship moving above them; a regular crop of such rumours followed in 1913, and Germany even thought it expedient to announce publicly that none of her airships had been over England. What the rumours really indicated was, of course, the discomfort of the knowledge that the Germans had in the Zeppelin an airship of proved practical use, while we had only doubtful and precarious experiments. So for the first time the Army Estimates opened up a considerable debate on air defence. Much that Colonel Seely said then, in his anxiety about these mysterious noises, makes strange

reading on this side of the war; he virtually ridiculed the idea of any direct danger to life or property from the air, and, though he may have been concealing much that he knew of such possibilities, his reassurances were effective, because the very general view at that time of the value of aircraft in war was confined to their use in scouting and intelligence work—as new eyes of miraculous power for army commanders; aircraft were certainly not regarded by the public as fighting instruments. Colonel Seely had much to say of our advance in aviation. A military flying school had been established. There were now three squadrons, a total of 120 officers and 598 men, and this year was to see the number of squadrons raised to five. One obstacle in the way of development was the difficulty of procuring British machines and engines; the corps possessed 101 planes, to be raised this year to 125. He was also able to say that as yet no fatal accident had occurred at the school. The year 1912 had been rather alarming; 95 people had been killed in accidents in various countries, and Great Britain had lost 7 officers. The loss was not a heavy one, as later years learned to reckon losses; but it was heavy in so small a corps, and in September the use of monoplanes had been suspended as being “too dangerous.” The ban did not last long, for in the summer of 1913 M. Pégoud was revolutionising ideas of what stability in the air could mean. He had flown upside down, and had come over to England to give us at Brooklands the first thrill of watching a man “loop the loop”; there lay, though few can have known it at the time, the germs of all the incredible developments of flying in the war, which were to use the old “accidents” of early aviation—nose-diving, side-slipping, spinning, and the rest—as deliberate methods of air-fighting.

One of the most patient of early experimenters was

killed this summer, Colonel Cody. He had for years been working, more or less in conjunction with the army authorities at Aldershot, on man-lifting box-kites. Of late years he had been building biplanes of a sort, but his box-kite predilections made them by a queer combination both too light and too clumsy. He crashed in one of them in August.

The Opposition's policy of exhibiting legislation under the Parliament Act as a mere farce had at least relieved the Government of much trouble with their Bills. There was little debating of Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment when they came up for the second time. "Cabinet tyranny" was the catchword, and it was used for criticism of one interesting Bill of the session—the Provisional Collection of Taxes Bill. A curious constitutional point had been raised in the previous year by Mr Gibson Bowles, a Conservative member long known for his ability in financial matters, and for his skill in technical procedure. He had used both for years in a jealous defence of the private member's rights in the House. He used them now in a wider affair. He had brought an action in the High Court, in 1912, which raised the question whether the financial resolutions always passed on Budget day were a proper legal authority for the collection of taxes—could the subject be taxed constitutionally except by Act of Parliament? He brought his action against the Bank of England, for deducting from some dividends due to him income tax at the new rate imposed by the resolutions of that year before the Finance Act had been passed; and the Court of Chancery upheld him. The serious aspect of the judgment was this—that if the Budget resolutions were not valid authority, and no collection of a new or increased tax could take place till the Finance Act of the year was duly passed, there would be an interval of months, or at least weeks, after



the announcement in the Budget speech of the new duty, during which traders could clear stocks from the bonded warehouses and import fresh stocks at the old rate of duty, thus completely upsetting the Exchequer's calculations of the yield of a new tax. There was, of course, a simple way out of the difficulty : Parliament, being sovereign, had no more to do than pass an Act giving to the Budget resolutions the force of law until the passing of the Finance Act each year. But there remained the interest of the extraordinary fact, which the case had revealed, that for a century and more people had paid taxes without a murmur before the authorities had the right to collect them.

No Government could have existed without taking some such step ; and the Opposition was therefore straining a point rather far when they attacked the Bill as one more instrument of Cabinet tyranny, the line being that the Government, having altered the constitution to free their hands in legislation, had now done it again to ease their way in taxation. But the Opposition had to keep attention fixed on any point of attack they could make, and as far as possible off their own programme, because the only positive plank in it was Tariff Reform, and it was not even yet clear what as a party they meant by that. True, they arrived this year at a kind of formula for holding them together. In January correspondence and conference among the party leaders had ended in a pronouncement by Mr Bonar Law that a Unionist Government would impose no food taxes unless and until a General Election distinctly authorised them. But that gave no one much satisfaction. It did indeed allow Tariff Reformers who were not food taxers to act for all electoral purposes with those who were ; but it left them both open to what had proved so fatal in December 1905—the assertion that sooner or later Tariff Reform meant taxation of

food. Hamstrung like that, how could the party bring into the open the reality of the large economic question which, with a sound instinct for the vital concerns of a modern industrial community, they had made the line of party division? Everything else could turn upon it, for the social life as well as the national existence of such a community must come in the last resort to its command of wealth, private and public. Liberal finance, therefore, had been steadily aimed at proving that there was no need to be taken in by the blandishing offers of money from a tariff; Unionists were as steadily replying that old methods of taxation could foot the bill only by impositions which were driving capital out of the country, and therefore could not last long; that familiar jeremiad of the moment at shareholders' meetings, and in country-house parties up and down the kingdom, had had in 1912 the sanction of the Governor of the Bank of England himself, in a speech at the annual City dinner of the bankers. With the controversy still so much alive, and a dropping fire of propaganda carried on around the old questions of the effect of a tariff on volume of trade, on wages, on steadiness of employment, on credit, Liberals were not likely to give any rest to the Unionist difficulty about food taxes; and Mr Bonar Law's pronouncement made very porous shelter.

It was a strange fate which carried off together this summer two Unionists so similar in type as Mr George Wyndham and Mr Alfred Lyttelton. Both of them belonged to the charmed inner circle of the party, both had peculiar personal attractiveness, both in different ways had embittering ends to happy careers. Mr Wyndham, singularly handsome with his silver-grey hair and young face (he was not quite fifty when he died), had a delicate culture which, with his love of the English country, may have softened for him the sudden

failure of his work as Irish Secretary.<sup>1</sup> Mr Lyttelton, a first-rate cricketer and for years amateur champion of tennis, had had to face the ruthless storm aroused by the Chinese labour ordinance on the Rand after the Boer War, and to see all his other achievements borne down by it.<sup>2</sup> Lord Avebury, who also died this summer, was another Unionist who had many interests besides politics. A naturalist of repute, and a successful banker, he had in 1871 brought into being almost unwittingly something which was to develop into one of *the* characteristic institutions of English life—the Bank Holiday. The name has, like so many others, acquired a familiarity which has obscured its original meaning. Sir John Lubbock, as he then was, had no conception of what his plan for securing a little leisure for the ranks of his own profession was going to effect. It is a pity that he did not live a little longer to see his modest holiday rise to its amazing importance in 1914, when the closing of banks on the first Monday in August was used to tide the City and the nation over the first financial shock of war. In its turn the expansion of his original idea reacted upon him; it must have been his association in this way with the leisure time of the people which set him upon his ethical writing, and the famous listing of the Hundred Best Books.

The fact that from a session comparatively quiet in legislation Mr Lloyd George should have gone out to speak to great Liberal meetings of “a deliberate conspiracy to overthrow democratic government” may well serve to point the remark that no mere narrative of events can give the history of this time. He could use these phrases without appearing to his audiences to exaggerate. Conditions in Ulster were such that the Government was being seriously asked whether it was not its duty to put Sir Edward Carson under arrest. Two

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. ii., pp. 238, 254.

seizures of arms had been made in Ireland; large forces were drilling steadily in Ulster, and the whole organisation of an army—Signal Corps, Army Service Corps, and so on—was in being. The reply of the Government was that they preferred to regard Sir Edward Carson as a safety-valve; his activities blew off much of the steam and relieved the pressure. They could point to the result of a by-election in Londonderry, where a Liberal won the seat, as a proof that Ulster had no right to pretend to dictate with one voice to the British Parliament. It had been a remarkable election, even for Ireland; so thoroughly had every possible voter been polled that dying men went to record their votes with doctors at their side; and it cheered a Ministry which had been suffering some nasty losses, including that of Sir Rufus Isaacs's seat at Reading when he became Lord Chief Justice. Still, no one imagined that their ostensible calm about affairs in Ireland represented their real feelings.

There was other trouble there too. In August a reverberating industrial struggle had broken out in Dublin. For some years two men had been busily organising labour in Ireland. James Larkin, breaking away in 1908 from English Trade Unionism, on the fringe of which Irish labour had existed as a rather neglected dependent, had founded the Irish Transport Workers' Union, with all the more ease in making a militant body of it because labour conditions in Ireland were so far worse than in Great Britain. In 1910 he was joined by James Connolly, who had spent the previous seven years in the United States, and been deeply imbued with the fighting spirit of the Industrial Workers of the World. The two began a regular campaign of the most "direct action" kind of strike, launched upon employers in an industry without any notice, and extended, if necessary, by sympathetic strikes. They

had had no little success in improving conditions, so much, in fact, that by the summer of 1913 employers in Dublin decided that the time had come to smash this sectional striking by one fight on a scale too large for the unions to stand up against. They began dismissing members of the Transport Workers' Union from their employment; Larkin retaliated by calling a general strike, and the employers capped it with something like a general lock-out.

This was far franker warfare than England had yet seen, for the new Irish unions were socialist and "direct action" from top to bottom, and that was not the case in England. Larkin was now to discover this. Naturally he looked to British Trade Unionism to help him by refusing to handle any goods for Irish trade, carried on as it was by blackleg labour. British leaders would not go so far. They dreaded the effect of the strike upon the "direct action" influence in their own ranks; they were very uncertain about their power to manage successfully sympathetic strikes; and under Connolly's influence there was a large element of open Republicanism in the Irish movement with which they did not want to associate their resources. Larkin got very little by his visit to England. But this did not mean that the effect there of Larkinism was small. It set the militant sections of the British unions seething; and the leaders, though they might refuse to act in alliance, could not miss the warning conveyed by the attack of the Dublin employers. There in full operation was the lesson hanging over their own heads—the first undisguised union-breaking.

One result was that, cool as they had been to Larkin's own approaches, they were prompt to take a very strong line when, in October, he was sentenced to seven months' imprisonment for using seditious language. The Ministry were hotly attacked in the

House, and Labour members had plenty of support from Liberals in vigorous resentment of what they called the introduction into British courts of the idea of *lèse-majesté*. The implied reference was, of course, to Germany, where one of the worst obstacles in the way of labour leaders was the constant possibility of their being handily locked up on some almost mediæval charge concerning the Emperor's dignity; the vague word "sedition" might easily apply as mediæval a muzzle in England. Besides, it was more than a little absurd for a Government which had for months been listening quietly to the things said in Ulster to clap a man into prison for using seditious language in Dublin. Ministers surrendered with amazing swiftness. Larkin had hardly served a fortnight of his sentence when he was released. Here again the prevailing new spirit had shown itself: a big meeting at the Albert Hall had decided to use militant suffrage methods of heckling Ministers every time they appeared in public until Larkin was released.

For the moment, militancy in the suffrage movement was rather less violent. Suffragists were interrupting church services by interpolating chanted petitions of their own into the Litany, in the form of prayers for their hunger-strikers. But there was a lull in destructiveness. One reason was that an action brought by a firm in Regent Street for damage to their windows had ended in a judgment which might render any individual member of the Women's Social and Political Union liable to be cast in damages, whether she had or had not been directly concerned in the destruction in question. But a reason which probably had more influence was that the whole tide of the movement was changing curiously. Vast numbers of women who had never thought about the vote at all had been made to think of it, numbers more who had been lukewarm were

gathering heat. Those even who definitely objected to violent methods were being moved by the devotion of the militants. The most casual sporting and dancing young woman began to be attracted by the putting up of such a good fight. The most uninterested of business men's wives began to be aware of sympathy ; after all, the "Cat and Mouse" prisoners were women too. On the surface there might still be all sorts of differences ; a large meeting of women in Hyde Park might adorn themselves, as they did in July, with badges inscribed "Law-abiding Suffragists" ; and active militancy might be small in extent. Yet there was a feeling in the air that underneath all this women were drawing together. It was even slightly mysterious ; no one could quite tell how it was happening, or when it had begun ; but certainly during 1913 one sex was subtly consolidating against the other. Unwelcome though the conclusion might be, it was beyond doubt that militancy had produced an enormous change ; and that is probably why in this winter it somewhat relaxed its energies.

Not even the Established Church was to escape the atmosphere of conflict. At the end of 1913 the Kikuyu controversy penetrated to England. Its origin lay as far back as July, when a missionary conference at Kikuyu, in Uganda, called for the purpose of finding a basis of united action among missionaries of the various Protestant persuasions, and ending in a joint Communion service, had led the Bishop of Zanzibar, a "high" Anglican, to accuse the Bishops of Uganda and Mombasa of heretical inclinations in matters of the episcopacy, the rite of confirmation and so on. By references to *Foundations*, a recently published volume of theological essays, he swept into the controversy the whole school of modernist religious thought which was rising in Oxford, and was providing the young Mr Ronald Knox with admirable material for transcen-

dental squibs.<sup>1</sup> But it was thunder and not squibs that filled columns of *The Times* in this December and the following January. As ecclesiastical thunder is apt to do, it receded placidly to a horizon of postponement when the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom the Bishop of Zanzibar was making "bell, book and candle" appeals, intimated that he was waiting for a "precise question" to be submitted to him.

To this may be appended a remarkable instance, a few months later, of religious concord—the unveiling of a statue of Bishop Gore in Birmingham. The event had less attention at the time than it deserved, for it occurred in the midst of acute alarm about Ireland. Dr Gore had been translated from Birmingham to Oxford in 1911; it was a most striking testimony to the quality of his strong personality that a great business city, where the prevailing religious influences were not, perhaps, those of the Established Church, should have paid him the rare tribute of a statue in his lifetime. But it might be said with some truth that the incident was no less striking a testimony to the character of Birmingham.

That city suffered two losses just now in the family which the general public could not think of apart from Birmingham. In October Mr Arthur Chamberlain had died. Less famous than his brother, and never a man for huge political meetings, he was said to be in fact the more able of the two; but he had been content to devote his capacities mainly to his city and his business. He had, however, made one great contribution to politics; for it was a scheme that he had devised for reduction of the number of licensed houses in Birmingham

<sup>1</sup> Just before, in November, there had died, at the age of ninety, one of the great Victorians whose work had called modernism into existence, Alfred Russel Wallace. He had been intimately associated with Darwin in theories of the origin of species, the hypothesis of natural selection having flashed upon their minds almost simultaneously.



by means of a compensation fund which provided the model for the Unionist Licensing Act of 1904. In the Tariff Reform controversy he had been on the Free Trade side, but as he avoided public platforms the brothers had been in no sensational opposition. The other loss was the intimation in January 1914 by the more famous brother that he would not stand again for election. He had hardly appeared in the new Liberal Parliament at all. The violent strain of the Tariff Reform campaign had suddenly revealed its effects upon him, and he had had to live very quietly. Yet, even if he never went to the House, it seemed impossible to think of the representation of Birmingham without him. His lifelong companion, Mr Jesse Collings, faithful to the last, certainly could not think of it, and retired with him.

The space that Kikuyu had been able to occupy in the newspapers may have indicated a readiness to find refuge during the holiday time from the lowering sky of politics. But few subjects seemed to provide gratifying refuge just now. Early in December a big glove-fight had at last been staged for Bombardier Wells with a young Frenchman, Georges Carpentier. The crowds of rank and fashion that paid their large prices to see a couple of very good-looking young men stripped for the ring were able to look at them for precisely seventy-seven seconds, the time that it took the Frenchman to knock the Englishman out. The appointment of an American railway man, the General Superintendent of the Long Island Railway, to be General Manager of the Great Eastern Railway, excellent as it may have been for a line with the heavy suburban "rush" traffic in which he was peculiarly experienced, rather rubbed in a sense of our incompetence. Meanwhile the athletic authorities of Oxford were considering whether the merely English talent of Cambridge could fairly be

expected to stand up to the lavish supply of Americans and Colonials which the Rhodes Scholarships brought to Oxford, and whether they must not put themselves under some self-denying ordinance in sport. The year had also seen our consciousness of failure in the Olympic Games issue in a proposal to raise a fund for training competitors; the proposal came to nothing, mainly owing to the dislike of the veiled professionalism which it would involve. Literature entertained itself by entertaining M. Anatole France to dinner during a brief visit he paid to London in December; and then by organising a mock trial of John Jasper for the murder of Edwin Drood, with Mr G. K. Chesterton as judge and Mr Bernard Shaw as foreman of the jury.

New Year's Day set the Tadpoles and Tapers of party headquarters all agog again with an interview which Mr Lloyd George gave to *The Daily Chronicle*. For his remarks about naval expenditure, the un-aggressive temper of Germany, and the danger of Liberalism "betraying its trust," were plain enough advertisement of Cabinet dissensions on the Estimates, which its opponents might exploit. Mr Winston Churchill was at the moment in Paris; Mr F. E. Smith, however, could gratify both his political feelings and the impulse of his friendship with Mr Churchill by informing Mr Lloyd George at the earliest opportunity that he was "a bungling amateur."

Then for a few days the industrial world and Ulster divided interest fairly equally. In the former a strange situation was developing out of the Dublin struggle. While this had apparently shown that English Trade Unionism was still rather slow and steady, there was in fact grave anxiety. The extremists both among employers and labour were, of course, more than ever convinced that they were right; the full-sized struggle had opened. But more grave was the state of mind of

the moderate men. Trade union leaders, by the very fact of holding back from direct action, had the more need to press on in their own chosen direction—federation into big powerful unions; and masters could not watch this without apprehension, for it must mean that the amicable employer would suffer even more than before with the stiff-necked in a dispute. Sheet anchors were dragging, too, on both sides; if the Amalgamated Society of Engineers had repudiated the agreement of 1907, the Cotton Spinners' Amalgamation had repudiated the famous Brooklands Agreement, which had kept the peace in Lancashire, to the envy of all other industries, for twenty years. If cotton was losing its common sense, what hope was left? Now in January 1914, when the struggle in Dublin was dying down to a drawn battle, a relic of it loomed over England with the announcement of the "Triple Alliance"—the agreement between the unions of the three great industries of railway workers, miners and transport workers. This nominally was not for the purposes of sympathetic striking. The idea was to enter upon working agreements of equal duration, so that if one of the industries decided at the expiration of its agreement to refuse work without a reconsideration of terms, the two others would be free at the same time to hold off from renewal of theirs. It was a subtle distinction without much meaning. The public was less concerned with this hair-splitting than with the obvious fact that, whether the General Strike was the deliberate policy of the leaders or no, a simultaneous strike of the Triple Alliance must paralyse the whole of industry. So here also a kind of fatalism crept in. Just as in the case of our relations with Germany, though there might be comparatively few men with clear purposes in mind, the bulk found themselves sliding forward in a bewildered way, doing things which they might think it foolish to do, but

which in the circumstances they would be fools not to do. It was, however, only for a short time that public interest was divided. Ulster soon took it all. Few perhaps could have quite accounted for the access of hopelessness that ensued upon Mr Bonar Law's speech at Bristol on 15th January, when he warned the country that it was "rapidly drifting to civil war." That was not much more than had been said by many people for a twelvemonth past. Yet it had an extraordinary effect, and almost as much significance hung round a sermon by the Archbishop of York, ingeminating peace, though such sermons also had not been uncommon. To the public at large there was little more than a growing sense of the air thickening round them, until the first flash shot through it with some phrases used by Mr Walter Long in moving an amendment to the Address at the beginning of February ; he spoke of anxiety in the navy and army, and added that "he believed Unionists, whenever they had been asked, had advised the members of the services to do their duty." So this was what had not been getting into the newspapers ; to the officers of the armed forces civil war was as near as that, and the world from which they came and in which they moved knew it. After this the public cared for very little else.

The House of Commons could not equally absorb itself in one thing. Just when the ministerial part most needed a united front, news from South Africa started friction again with labour. For some weeks there had been trouble on the Rand and affrays in Johannesburg. On 28th January it was announced that the South African Government had deported ten labour leaders, and imprisoned a member of the South African Parliament, Mr Cresswell. Labour in England was in an ill mood for such an occurrence, and in the House was openly hostile. The Government stood their

ground ; the deportation had, no doubt, been a high-handed act, but they were not going to interfere with the authority of a self-governing Dominion. They countered the Labour disaffection rather cleverly by taking this Imperialistic line, which prevented the Opposition from making much use of the affair ; and they refused to withhold the Royal Assent to the Indemnity Bill which the deportation had rendered necessary. The arrival of the deportees in England at the end of February, a dinner to them at the House of Commons, and a mass meeting in Hyde Park, kept up a show of vigorous protest ; but it was more to satisfy the rank and file than anything else. The truth came out at a joint meeting a little later of representatives of the Trade Union Congress, the General Federation of Trade Unions, and the Independent Labour Party, which, ignoring taunts, decided by a majority of ten to one to take no action which might turn out the Government.

For the beginning of March had brought serious developments in the Irish situation. First came a peace move which had long been vaguely considered. The obvious suggestion for meeting the case of Ulster—that of some kind of exclusion from the Home Rule Bill—had been made two years before. But it had been put aside by Nationalists and Liberals. It was not as simple as it sounded. Ulster included counties which were politically Nationalist, and even in the distinctly Unionist parts—even in the stronghold of Belfast—there were large Roman Catholic and Nationalist minorities. Was Ulster itself, while protesting against being at the mercy of a Dublin Parliament, and leaving at its mercy Unionists in the other provinces, to keep these minorities at its mercy in its own province ? Unionists had their easy gibe in saying that what the Nationalists really wanted was to make sure that the

only part of Ireland which was industrially wealthy and "squeezable" should not escape them. But if some Nationalists did sometimes think of their future budgets, there was much more depth in their feeling that it would be deplorable if Ireland, becoming "a nation once again," could not be whole, but must always be liable to be rent by difficulties about isolated minorities, instead of giving them their balancing interplay in a single representative body. That was, at least, a vital point of view; now at the eleventh hour it gave way in an effort for peace. Mr Asquith produced on 9th March a scheme of "provisional exclusion." Any county in Ulster was to be empowered to vote itself out of the Home Rule Bill, after a preliminary requisition by a certain proportion of the registered voters, for a period of six years. Within that time there must in the normal course be not less than two general elections in England, in 1915 and 1920. The excluded counties would then come under the Dublin Parliament unless the Imperial Parliament confirmed their exclusion. In other words, the dissident counties were to be given the chance in at least two general elections to prove that their exclusion was right. The scheme had but cool welcome. The Nationalists had made a forced concession; Liberals were uneasy about possible further mutilations; Unionists disliked the implication that exclusion was the wrong policy and would prove itself wrong; Sir Edward Carson called it "a sentence of death with stay of execution for six years."

The scheme had hardly begun to be discussed when it was swept aside by startling reports, ten days later, that officers at the Curragh were resigning their commissions rather than risk having to march against Ulster. These reports followed close upon an ominous debate in the Commons. On 19th March Sir Edward

Carson, speaking to a vote of censure on Mr Asquith for his Irish policy, had asserted that within the previous two days there had been discussion at the War Office of mobilisation for active service in Ireland ; and Mr Bonar Law had remarked that "if it were a case merely of disorder the army would and ought to obey ; if it were a question of civil war soldiers were citizens like the rest of us." The ostentatious manner in which Sir Edward Carson and eight other Unionists walked out of the House during the debate suggested crisis ; and now came this news from the Curragh. With a gasp people asked themselves if war was actually beginning.

For a week the affair remained cloudy and alarming. The Prime Minister was both answering questions in Parliament and dealing with a situation which had yet to be worked out, so that inevitably information was piecemeal. First came some reassurance. It was true that after interviews with General Sir Arthur Paget, commanding in Ireland, most of the officers of the Cavalry Brigade at the Curragh—57 out of 70—and the Brigadier himself, General Gough, had intimated that they preferred dismissal to obeying orders for service in Ulster. But upon explanations given at the War Office, to which they had been summoned, they had returned to duty, their action having been caused by "misunderstanding." The Prime Minister authorised *The Times* to state on 23rd March that any military movements contemplated by the Government had been merely precautionary, and that no general inquiry into the intentions of officers had been contemplated. A debate on the same day in a House crowded to the last inch elicited rather more. The Government had decided on 14th March to take steps to protect military stores and munitions in the disaffected parts—a very natural precaution. General Paget, following a quite usual course in the moving of troops, arranged meetings at

the Curragh, first with General Gough to work out details, and then with the other officers of the Brigade to make the details clear. Thinking it prudent to make sure of his ground with the senior officers he had intimated that, if any of them were not prepared to obey orders, they should absent themselves from the conference. But his proceedings had gone amiss in two ways. Firstly, the message about senior officers had been misinterpreted, and taken to mean that all officers were being given the choice of obeying orders or not ; all that had ever been contemplated by the Government in that direction was that officers actually domiciled in Ulster might be excused from duty there, just as in India and in African territories natives of any rank in the army were always excused from active service in their own home districts. Secondly, General Paget had talked in such a way as to suggest that far more than precaution was in contemplation ; he had hinted at movement of troops from England, and of co-operation by the navy, referring to orders which Mr Churchill, it appeared later, had given without the Prime Minister's knowledge, and which were cancelled as soon as possible. The combination of these gravely sounding statements with the choice which by mistake they had been called upon to make, not unnaturally suggested to the officers that the actual coercion of Ulster was to begin ; this was the misunderstanding which the War Office explanations had cleared away.

So far the Government had the sympathy at any rate of their own supporters. But the next revelations raised a storm of cross-currents. It came out that General Gough had then received a document from the War Office, signed by Colonel Seely, General French, Chief of the General Staff, and Sir J. S. Ewart, Adjutant-General, which, after a couple of short paragraphs stating the duties of troops in keeping civil order and



the right of the Government to their services, went on to say that the Government "had no intention whatever of using this right in order to crush political opposition to the policy or principles of the Home Rule Bill." The instant outcry from Nationalists, Liberals and Labour that this was a sheer surrender to the army elicited the awkward fact that during the Cabinet discussion of a document which had contained only the two paragraphs on the duties of troops Colonel Seely had had to leave for an audience of the King, and, the discussion being over when he returned, had on his own responsibility added the intimation about the Government's intentions. The Prime Minister stated that all the three signatories to the document had tendered their resignations, but these had not been accepted. For a few days more the affair dragged on, with fresh side-issues. Lord Morley, it appeared, had had some responsibility for the offending statements. The coincidence of Colonel Seely's audience of the King with the Cabinet discussion of the document was used to insinuate some connection of the King himself with the interpolation. A new Army Order on discipline, intimating that no officer was to be questioned by his superior officer as to his probable attitude in any emergency, and no officer was to ask for assurances as to orders he might be called upon to obey, also came in for debate. Mr Bonar Law kept on reading extracts from officers' letters, showing that they had been questioned; the Prime Minister kept on deploring all this incursion of "hypothetical contingencies" into the soldier's life; Mr Lloyd George was scornful about "optional obedience"; the Labour members in some glee harped perpetually on the example officers were setting of refusing duty in a civil crisis, a lesson which might have its fruits in the ranks in case of industrial trouble; and the general public asked itself what incalculable harm all this confusion might be doing. At

last this whole stage of the excitement about Ireland culminated in a dramatic announcement by the Prime Minister, on 30th March, that Colonel Seely, General French and General Ewart having persisted in their resignations, these had now been accepted, and that he himself was going to take over the War Office. Upon which, as his new post involved vacating his seat, he abruptly left the House.

A breathless fortnight thus ended a breathless first quarter of the year. Yet some other things had been happening. *Parsifal* had for the first time been performed in England at the opera-house in Covent Garden; and there was much talk of the future of that theatre. Late in 1913 the Duke of Bedford had sold the whole Covent Garden site to Mr Mallaby Deeley, M.P., for £2,750,000. Londoners had been oddly disgruntled by this transaction. They had always known, of course, that the market belonged to the Duke; they had grumbled at times about the private ownership as responsible for some of the messy inconveniences of the place. But now with a sudden access of concern for it, reading accounts of its strange beauties in the early morning (few of them ever saw it at that time save the strayed revellers from Covent Garden balls, who liked to feel adventurous at the market coffee-stalls in the small hours) when the masses of flowers and fruit for London's day painted its dingy aisles, and even cabbages and carrots, in the quantities in which they came, gave tones to the picture, Londoners felt obscurely hurt by the revelation that such an institution might be sold over their heads and turned into something else. All the talk for and against removing the market—and it was absurdly cramped, reached by narrow streets, and responsible for constant complications of the Strand traffic—was still going on desultorily when, in July, it was announced that the site had changed hands again,

Sir Joseph Beecham having bought it. This turned talk rather to the opera than to the market; for his son, Mr Thomas Beecham, had for some years been prominent in a group of people busily concerned with the future of opera in England. Its art appeal alone certainly had no great hold, as a recent lavish experiment had shown. In November 1911 a large new opera-house, built at great expense in Kingsway by Mr Oscar Hammerstein, a magnate of the New York theatres, had been opened; within a year it had become a music-hall under other management. There had, no doubt, been mistakes in its career, some of which an Englishman might have avoided; it had opened at a period of the year when opera had no place in social habits; its early productions had been rather insignificant. But some fine things had been given, Nikisch and other famous conductors had taken part; and yet it failed. The worst of it was, not the indication that a great city like London would not support two opera-houses, but the suspicion that, if anything happened to the Covent Garden house, and the settled habits which did just keep that going, though very precariously, were broken, London might not even support one. The depressing fact for lovers of music was that the opera would fill only to hear the few first-rank stars, whose fees were so enormous that opera to houses half filled on other occasions with a genuinely musical audience was becoming impossible. This all came back partly to the change in social ideas which affected so many things. The new world of fashion was not necessarily going to preserve any of the habits of the old; it was living its own life and following its own tastes without much regard for tradition; if opera bored it, it was not going to respect—as earlier generations, bored or not, had done—a hallowed institution of the London season. There was, indeed, a fairly successful programme this year; but mainly because of the

prominence given to the Russian craze with *Prince Igor*, *Le Coq d'Or*, *Boris Godounov*, and others. Thus, though Sir Joseph Beecham's purchase of the Covent Garden estate seemed to promise some kind of support for Mr Thomas Beecham's energies, it was doubtful whether anything would restore opera in London to its former veneration.

Another portent for the old-fashioned was the issue in March this year of *The Times* at a penny. Only a little while before it had shocked its readers by coming down to twopence and admitting illustrated advertisements; now it seemed to be forced into bidding for wider circulation, and the last Victorian bulwark might be tottering. At a penny could it help becoming "sensational," and sinking to pictures of the day's news? These had for some time past crept upwards from the halfpenny Press of the late nineties into sheets of such respectable ancestry as *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Chronicle* and *The Daily News*, which had combined in 1912 with *The Morning Leader*. The news pictures of that period look now coarse and hazy, and were more often than not a day late in appearing; neither photographers nor block-makers had discovered yet how to do their work well under pressure, and for that reason a rather proud paper like *The Manchester Guardian* confined itself to single pictures of a leisurely kind, and rarely attempted news pictures of the day. Press photographers on public occasions were still liable to be regarded as a rather impertinent intrusion with something undesirably American about them. But a new generation of illustrated weeklies—*The Tatler*, *The Sketch*, *The Bystander*—with their persistent pages of snapshots of people at race-meetings, at shooting-parties, on golf links, or shopping in town, were breaking down this dislike, and the staid older weeklies, *The Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic*, were feeling

dowdy, and beginning to attempt these new habits. Even those people who resented the impudence of that sort of publicity were learning to make the best of it. Not many of such persons were left by now; the far more numerous "right" people, who were tolerantly amused by publicity, and the considerable number who were beginning to like it, kept the illusion of importance going for the rich social climbers and the arrant nobodies to whom appearance in these photographs gave profound gratification. The whole thing was becoming a hypnotism, very cheapening all round; at one end the nobodies destroying by the very crowd of them any social *cachet* that could ever have been acquired in this way, and yet greedy for it; at the other, the working man and his wife, sensible enough till they turned to their daily paper, gazing absorbed at pictures of "The Countess of So-and-so and Friend in the Paddock." There was one serious effect: no one could believe any longer in aristocracy. The illustrated Press was helping to merge all other distinctions in one fairly broad division between rich people with their hangers-on and the rest.

In some better ways the effect of the illustrated Press in getting rid of old distinctions was beginning to show itself. Dress of good taste was no longer the exclusive property of women comfortably circumstanced. Newspaper photographs and sketches were showing other women what dress ought to look like; and the vast reach of advertisement in the cheaper papers enabled mass-production of "modes and robes" to be remunerative. Taste of a kind in furniture, too, was spreading, since the mass-advertisement together with the instalment system, making its first appearance on a large scale about this time, enabled people of small means to set themselves up with a kind and a range of furniture that their fathers and mothers had not commanded. In neither case was the change altogether admirable.

Being a mechanical mental process it implied no genuine sense of beauty or elegance. But it got rid of many old stuffinesses; it did suggest that there was such a thing as choice and enjoyment in the appointments of life, and it did produce an enlivening of outlook which might well end in a real approach to taste. There was more and more money for the mass-advertisement to catch by broadening out the supply of amenities. The Budget of this year was astounding, with its revenue surplus of £9,000,000 over the estimate; the trade returns continued to flatter us, and prices were showing no more tendency to rise.

This was an England in which it was difficult to discern character or opinion of such passionate conviction as the shadow of civil war would seem to imply. Indeed, the strongest feeling just now of the average man was that the disastrous element in the outlook lay not in any insuperable and fatal deadlock anywhere, but in the growth of a strange tendency to play with fire. Politicians tempted further and further by their own extravagances of language, suffragists going always a little deeper into destructiveness, Labour and Ulster moulding forces more and more into the machinery of conflict, and all the while a most dangerous number of the comfortable classes making up their minds that something was bound to happen—the whole situation had the mounting unreality of a nightmare, in which a man knows himself to be more sane than the creature he is for the moment being. When peers like Lord Halifax and Lord Milner, elderly dons like Professors Goudy and Dicey, eminent clerics and men of letters were signing, in their comfortable studies, in February and March, a “British Covenant” declaring their belief that any action to wreck a Bill they disliked was justified, did they really envisage all the explosive matter near which they were striking matches?

But now that the Curragh incident had swept the fog aside, and revealed the very brink of the precipice, would not people come to their senses? It looked as if they might. When the Commons in the first week of April took up the Home Rule Bill for its third passage there was a much more conciliatory feeling in the House. Mr Balfour disappointingly indulged himself in school-boy remarks about the "fright" of the Government; but there was a genuine access of hopefulness when Sir Edward Carson, speaking soberly about the fate which seemed to overshadow Ireland, and the real apprehensions to be overcome in Ulster, turned at the end towards Mr John Redmond and said: "It is worth while your trying. Will you?" They had not addressed one another for months past; the phrasing of this appeal was extraordinarily—almost startlingly—simple. Was this the plain natural word, spoken at last, which would break through the nightmare, and let us, if still in some bewilderment, wake up?

Unfortunately there was another possibility. It was that the Government's back might be to the wall, and with a bit more harrying it might go down. If the way were not made easy for them in Ireland they must go forward to a situation from which they might easily shrink at the last, and ruin themselves. The Naval Estimates might be very dangerous for them, now that Mr Lloyd George had definitely put himself at the head of the considerable mass of Liberalism and Labour determined to restrict that kind of expenditure. Labour's revolt against the arrest of Larkin and the South African deportations, though smothered down, had still possibilities to be exploited. Three-cornered candidatures were already losing the Government an alarming number of seats (they had recently lost one on the South African affair), and Mr Lloyd George was saying that the danger for his party was not Ulster, but the disunion between

Liberals and Labour. So at the very moment of hopefulness all the Government's opponents saw bright chances in a final assault. For thus, instead of merely saving Ulster while the rest of Ireland had its way, the whole field would be won; an end would be put to all this subversive legislation and threatening finance (the year's Budget was once more stiffening up progressive taxation of incomes); and a party going to the polls with its Parliament Act Bills lost, the suffragists its irreconcilable enemies, its own left wing and Labour mistrustful, would certainly not come back to power.

Militant suffragism also seemed to see the Government as with its back to the wall, for outrages broke out again virulently. Houses, cricket pavilions and grand stands, stations, seaside piers and hotels, including a brand-new one at Felixstowe, were being burned; a bomb in St John's Church, Westminster, blew out a stained-glass window just after evening service one Sunday, another was found under the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey, and another in St George's, Hanover Square; Birmingham Cathedral was splashed with whitewash and stencilled with suffragist mottoes; Wargrave Church was burned to the ground. An attempt appeared to have been made to break the water supply of Glasgow. Pictures which were especially in the public mind—the Rokeby *Venus* at the National Gallery because of the high price the nation had paid for it, the Sargent portrait of Henry James at the Royal Academy—were damaged, and a case of porcelain smashed in the British Museum. The authorities once again closed the great public galleries. The King was assailed with shouted appeals at a charity matinée; and at his own Court a lady being presented dropped suddenly on her knees and cried: "Your Majesty, won't you stop torturing women?" The Home Office Vote turned again into a debate on militancy; Mr McKenna



produced figures of the working of the Cat and Mouse Act; of 83 persons discharged under it 15 had given up militancy, and over 20 more had gone abroad. But figures did not alter recent facts. Mr McKenna was advised (by Lord Robert Cecil, for instance) to try deportation; that, as he replied, would give him no solution, since any place chosen for deported offenders, such as the island of St Kilda, would have to be made in effect into a prison, and the deported would merely recommence hunger-striking there with added difficulties for the authorities in looking after them. For the time, he was proposing to secure lists of the subscribers to the militant bodies, and take steps to cut off the funds; he asserted that most of the outrages now were paid work. Perhaps the grimmest passage in his speech was that in which he stated that women were being chosen to go to prison whose health was so poor that they might die there.

The momentary hopefulness about Ireland faded rapidly. Sir Edward Carson's appeal to Mr Redmond had been made on 6th April. The next news was that on the night of 24th-25th April the largest and most defiant piece of gun-running had taken place in Ulster. The coastguard had been decoyed, telephone and telegraph communication interrupted, and along guarded roads 25,000 rifles and 8,000,000 cartridges had been rushed away to points of distribution by lorries and cars; the completeness of organisation was revealed in the fact that no less than 12,000 men had been at work. The origin of these munitions was not the least of the nightmare. Unionists who were raising the spectre of German hostility to foment the discords about the Naval Estimates were deliberately publishing to Germans the imminence of civil war by buying rifles and cartridges. It was so open an association that Sir Edward Carson referred frankly to purchases of "Mausers";

and a letter had actually appeared in the newspapers from certain German professors to warn Ulster that Protestant Germany did not mean to go quite so far as taking a share in hostilities. The Curragh incident revived with the publication on 22nd April of a White Paper giving the documents which had passed; the measures which the Government said they had conceived as purely precautionary were bitterly attacked as a form of rather subtle and treacherous provocation; afraid of what might happen when the Home Rule Bill became law, they were, it was said, trying to goad Ulster into a premature explosion which they might suppress before the country had time to take a stand about full-blown civil war.

Such accusations were part of a hardening of tone now in the House. The Opposition was going back to the demand for nothing less than the complete exclusion of north-eastern Ireland from Home Rule, and for that reason made another violent scene when the third reading of the Home Rule Bill was moved on 21st May. They objected to the Bill leaving the Commons with no security for Ulster. But the Bill itself could not be amended without losing the protection of the Parliament Act. Mr Asquith's proposal for provisional exclusion must therefore be in a separate Bill, which, with the pressure of the Budget and Estimates in the Commons, was to be introduced in the Lords. Fastening upon this the Opposition, on the ground that they had a right to the information before they let the Home Rule Bill go, asked for details of the Amending Bill, which Mr Asquith on a plea of respect for the other House refused to give. Thereupon the now familiar disorder broke out, aggravated when the Speaker, in a well-intentioned but perhaps not wise effort to awaken a sense of responsibility, asked the leader of the Opposition whether such conduct had his consent and support. Mr Bonar Law

only too gladly jumped at the chance of a haughty reply, and the House had to be adjourned. When, on 25th May, the Bill received its third reading, the Nationalists might be enthusiastic, Mr Redmond might tell *The Freeman's Journal* that "the Union as we have known it is dead"; but Sir Edward Carson a week later was in Belfast "to make arrangements," as he said, "for the final scene." And attention now fixed upon Ireland became aware that the Home Rule side in its turn had over 100,000 volunteers enrolled; and saw the Nationalist party leaders, who had hitherto kept aloof from this reply to Ulster, taking a formal place on its committee in June.

At such a crisis the death of Joseph Chamberlain on 2nd July could be marked by only the briefest turning of thoughts. Time in these urgent sessions had gone quickly, and it was difficult to believe that it was eight years since the political arena had lost that familiar presence, the sharp dominating face with the pointed nose so curiously like the younger Pitt's, the thin figure as full of readiness as a boxer on his toes, the rather harsh, cold voice. One of Mr Chamberlain's distinctions was that all this was so familiar; the caricaturist had caught at him as eagerly as at Mr Gladstone. What the public which adored him now learned for the first time was, as Lord Morley put it, "his genius for friendship." They had thought of him as a ruthlessly hard hitter, and the very type of a dangerous enemy. But the man who after thirty years of political sword-swinging and Imperialist chauvinism could win that tribute from John Morley must have known something of friendship. He was one of the few people who have been both politician and statesman. Best known in his early years for his genius for party organisation (shrugged at then as "Birmingham caucus work"), he ended by being the first man to make the Colonial Office of front-rank

importance in a Ministry, and Imperial policy a coherent subject which would hold great popular audiences. He had made much party history, first in 1886, when the real question at stake was not whether he would accept Mr Gladstone's type of Home Rule, but whether the Liberal party was going in the future to be Gladstonian or Chamberlainite; afterwards when his influence was turning the Conservatives and Unionists into a party of enterprise and movement; and finally when he gave them a new political meaning as Imperial Preference opened out into Tariff Reform. He never led a Ministry, and he was not the stuff of which successful prime ministers are made. Parties, like other compounds, have their periods of alternate precipitation and crystallisation. The glorified prime ministers are the crystallisers. Lord John Russell, Mr Gladstone, Disraeli, at their zenith, were all the voices of slow political forces coming to consciousness, and made by them articulate. Peel is more the analogy for Mr Chamberlain. Both were precipitating forces, dropping into the compound the vigorous clarity and energy of some idea which loosens its inertia and individualises its components for fresh action; and, be it remarked, a compound in course of such a process is unstable. Curiously similar to Peel, for all their differences of temperament and of intellectual training, in the business mind which pinned a party's social policy to a great question of trade and finance, he would, like Peel, if he had ever led a party, have had to see it break in his hands.

From paying its tributes to him the House of Commons went back to the sharp sort of work that he had loved. The Opposition kept every sort of pressure operating on the Ministry now. The Naval Estimates had had a stormy passage, especially in the matter of the measures taken to ensure a safe supply of oil fuel, since naval engineering was basing its future upon that. But the

majority had held together. Then the Finance Bill offered an unusual opening for attack. It was, tactically, a very bad one for such a time. The Budget had included some proposals concerning rating which by complicating the Bill and finally compelling a great deal of re-drafting not only produced a distraction of energy disastrous at such a time, but called finally for the first guillotine time-table that had ever been applied to a Finance Bill; so that at the very moment when they most needed to appear conciliatory the Ministry had given another handle for outcries against their overbearing temper. When the Amending Bill appeared in the Lords, late in June, it was found to be even more conciliatory than Mr Asquith's original scheme; the end of the six years' delay for Ulster was to bring, not automatic inclusion under Home Rule failing other provision, but obligatory reconsideration of the future. Yet even this did not lighten the prospect. The Lords, amending the proposal to the permanent and total exclusion of Ulster, showed that the Opposition were not going to let the Government off. In effect they dared Ministers to drive Ulster to arms; and arrangements were being made for opening English country houses to women and children from there as soon as the fighting should begin.

A last gesture remained. Once already this year Irish affairs had interrupted the King's engagements. In March he and the Queen had been in Lancashire on another of the Royal visits to industry, seeing Port Sunlight and the Cammell Laird shipyards, when the Curragh incident hurried him back to London. They had taken up the round again in April, when they had paid a visit to Paris, less politically intimate than those of which King Edward had the secret, but publicly an enthusiastic success. They had entertained the King and Queen of Denmark in London; and had

returned from a visit to the lace and hosiery regions of the Midlands late in June, in time for the forms of sympathy with the Austrian Court in a deplorable incident in the Balkans, where the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been murdered at Sarajevo. On 18th July the King was to go to Spithead, to review the assembled fleets. He was late in leaving London, he took the Prime Minister down with him in the train, and he came back earlier than he had intended; the meaning of all which was that he had invited the political leaders to a conference on Ulster at the Palace. The Prime Minister and Mr Lloyd George, Lord Lansdowne and Mr Bonar Law, Mr Redmond and Mr Dillon, Sir Edward Carson and Captain Craig were to try to find some workable scheme of exclusion.

The political gossips found plenty to talk about. Constitutional purists remarked upon the dangerous precedent of the Crown calling into council any but its Ministerial advisers; there were scraps of high words about "a Royal *coup d'état*," and mutterings of the Ministry being manœuvred into surrenders; it was rumoured that the King would not give assent to the Home Rule Bill without an accompanying Amending Bill, so that if Unionists could hold up the latter their game was played for them. It was mainly gossip that the conference produced, and little hope. No one was surprised when it broke up quickly. On 24th July Mr Asquith announced in the Commons that the conference had been unable to come to any agreement "either in principle or in detail." Two days later, on a Sunday, Nationalist volunteers pulled off a great gun-running of their own near Howth, and this time two or three people had been shot by the regular troops. The Nationalists were hot for recriminations, and every thread in the affair was at its highest tension, when on

28th July Sir Edward Grey rose with all his gravity in the Commons to make a statement concerning the Austrian rejection of Serbia's reply to an ultimatum demanding satisfaction for the murder of the Archduke at Sarajevo.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WAR YEARS : PART I

**T**HAT last week before the war is extraordinarily difficult to focus. It is a baffling task to trace the gradations of national feeling beginning in a rather relieved turning away from Ulster, moving through an intensifying consciousness of another crisis elsewhere, up to the sharp realisation that this crisis was upon us too. Even to trace a gradation disturbs the focus. For though that would be historically right, it is also true that the end had the effect not of a culmination, but of a sudden shock. Minds had been moving, but only in a half-light ; what they moved to blazed as suddenly as if they had been in the dark. So unbelievable was it that we were in a European war ; so unmilitary, in spite of all the scares of recent years, were our habits of thought. At first the clear blacknesses of the Irish picture were simply " held " ; nothing else was actually on the screen for us. Then vague grey shapes flickered, but they might be no more than the half-seen coincident picture which is often thrown on to fade and leave the original clear again. Yet they persisted, the original picture dimmed, two pictures hung there together, until at last suddenly the new picture stared at us.

Thus Sir Edward Grey's statement on the afternoon of 28th July evoked only determination to " hang up " Irish affairs ; a pause of any kind there might save us. Sir Edward Carson came back from Belfast, and the Prime Minister announced on 31st July that consideration



of the Amending Bill would be postponed. By that time there were other shadows on the screen ; for the ordinary man already had something more in his mind than the feeling that at a time when ultimatums were flying about (and Russia was now emerging behind Serbia) it was unwise for Great Britain to be distracted by a domestic crisis. His newspapers had long familiarised him with the traditional fear among diplomats of any crisis in the Balkans ; and their instinctive feeling that, if ever the whole of Europe were to explode, the spark would come from that part of the map. And here was a Balkan incident. He was moreover only too familiar with the idea that Germany was waiting for "der Tag." True, this Sarajevo affair had no more in it essentially than other Balkan incidents to precipitate conflagration ; more dangerous incidents had quieted down. But if Great Britain were rent internally, if a Liberal Government, inclined in any case to peace abroad, were in open and notorious difficulty at home, this might be just the touch needed to make Germany snatch at her chance, and use this spark to fire the train. That was to most people what *The Times* meant when it wrote on 29th July of the need to close the ranks at home, and support Sir Edward Grey as the one man able "to limit the area of the war."

There was no great change in the public mind up to the end of that week. The lucky chance that our fleets were all in being for the King's review, and in position to be ordered to stations in the North Sea instead of dispersing for manœuvres, was estimated simply as a happy release from anxiety in a disturbed world, not involving us in anything more than watchful detachment. The week-end is one of the most baffling points of the whole gradation of feeling, for it was, of course, the week-end of the August Bank Holiday ; how much of the rising tension was due to a real sense of accumulating peril,

and how much to the hypnotised excitement of crowds with little to do but snatch at news ? On the Saturday, 1st August, it was known that Russian mobilisation had brought a declaration of war from Germany ; but this, though it meant that the Balkan incident was threatening, left it Balkan still ; it did not necessarily mean that Germany had taken the tremendous decision. The raising of the bank rate to 10 per cent., a figure it had not touched for fifty years, was merely an item in a general excitement. But on Sunday, 2nd August, the grey shapes really did begin to blur the outlines of what was before us. The drifting crowds of any Bank Holiday Sunday were swollen by hundreds of thousands who found it more exciting to be on the spot in London than to go to the country or seaside. So the event which first threw everything into the high light of " der Tag," the sweeping of France into the war, burst with every possible scrap of its effect. Extra editions of the Sunday papers, with the news that the Germans had crossed the frontiers of France and Luxemburg, were rushed into the streets ; the two meetings of the Cabinet looked far more portentous than the two meetings on Saturday ; and by the evening a vast mass of people were singing the National Anthem and the Marseillaise outside Buckingham Palace.

All the same, they did not quite know what they meant by it. Friendliness and encouragement to France, certainly, and a gesture openly anti-German ; beyond that . . . The British public went to bed that night hardly having yet said those two words. It awoke and, startingly, the phrase was complete. Beyond that—what ? For the morning papers had the news of the German intention to violate the neutrality of Belgium, and later in the day it was known that Belgium had appealed to Great Britain. In every city of the kingdom the great crowds drifted as on Sunday ; but less

vaguely, because the formless excitement had shaped itself entirely into that great question-mark. For all was uncertainty. Violated neutrality might be a grave outrage ; but no one could gauge the ways of diplomats or the formulas they might discover. France was at war ; but how much did that mean to us beyond disposition of our fleets ? A Liberal Government was in power which had talked steadily of peace for eight years past ; would they meet the crisis by resignation, or hold on for a way out ? Before people went to bed again the answer was emerging ; it was implicit in the whole of Sir Edward Grey's speech on that afternoon in the House ; it was clear for all who cared to read discerningly in one particular passage, in which, after saying that we had no actual obligations to Russia, no irrevocably *binding* obligations even to France, he went on : " But in view of the Anglo-French friendship let every man look into his own heart and construe the extent of the British obligation for himself." Words like these, from a man who so measured words, could leave little doubt. Even now groups of people, societies and individuals used the few remaining hours to plead for peace. But they availed little ; for everyone had that sense of only a few remaining hours, as soon as it was known that Sir Edward Grey had telegraphed to the German Government for a categorical undertaking to respect Belgian neutrality, and demanding an answer by midnight of 4th August.

Suspense of a kind still existed. We were not taking the broad line of a duty to France ; we were pinning our policy to a specific point, on which it might just conceivably be worth Germany's while to yield, and so allow the peace section of the Cabinet to turn the scale against war. France might well watch us during those twenty-four hours with anxiety and alarm, even if she was a little too impatient with a nation which had lived

in so much less familiarity with the idea of war than herself. But there hardly could be said to be a peace section of the Cabinet now, for Lord Morley and Mr John Burns had resigned. And the raising of the specific point proved to be wise; for it was Great Britain's entry into the struggle which made it a world war in the end, and that entry was now to take place, not as a mere tumble into the raw quarrel of France and Germany, but as the defence of international decency. The Cabinet resignations, the prolonging of the Bank Holiday for three days, the taking over by the Government of the railways through a committee of the General Managers, all looked as if the Ministry more than half knew the result of their demand to Germany. No reply came. We were at war.

War. Who can say what the shock of that word meant to the people of Great Britain? On the surface of consciousness a good many things, but none of them approaching in the very slightest to what the reality was to be; and in this, again, France never understood us. She was wholly, instantaneously at war; we were not. We could only envisage confusedly the implications of what had happened. There would be an effort, there would be hard times, and the nation would have to set its teeth and tighten its belt. Many men would have to give up their accustomed lives and fight; we had not supposed, certainly since the Boer War, that our small army could take all the strain; and when the Ministry asked for its first vote of credit of £100,000,000 they had taken authority for enlisting more men. But we had never, in any talk of war, thought of ourselves as providing really great military force; our sphere would be the sea. Yet anyhow the strain must be tremendous. No one could imagine what modern war would cost. And what trade could go on with all Europe ablaze? Only some poor remnant of the marvellous prosperity

that we had enjoyed. Some sad loss of life, but far more privation and ruin—unheard-of taxes, idle factories, paralysed ports, and starving people—this was to the majority the extreme spectre of war. It was bad enough; we had yet to see what our fibre was like after a century since the last real strain; and we had more to lose, and were in many ways more vulnerable now. We should indeed have to set our teeth. But how few there were who saw any further or could understand Sir Edward Grey's prediction of the ending of the old order over half Europe; fewer still who guessed for one moment that England as they had known it would never come back again. Yet beneath these surfaces of consciousness, beneath the prospects that could be discerned and put into words, was there not, at least in that first moment, some deeper, more instinctive shock? For the deeps were stirred. While it may have put the strain it was facing in material terms, what the nation was really thinking of was the spirit it had to meet the strain; what a great many were thinking of was the fineness that we were going to call upon; what some at least were confronting was the awful doubt whether such a shattering revelation of mortal impulse could leave any life of the spirit at all. Did not spiritual sensitiveness of so many kinds make an air in which for a few hours something lived that the pressures so soon at work hid again from us? Was there a strange fleeting vision of a land which, like ancient Egypt, had not a house in which there was not one dead? Did we, for that moment, catch our breath at something more than the thought of hunger and privation of many sorts? One can but ask the question now; what is at least certain is that, however much or little we might be able to express in words, everyone had deep in his mind that it was utterly impossible to say what a war of all Europe might mean. There was more, slight and intangible as

it may have been, in the mood of that day than the mere facing of hardship. This could only have brought the days of suspense to a culmination. But they ended in a shock. War. Brief and grim as the word, there was a moment's icy touch upon every soul.

But it was no touch of shrinking or uncertainty. The nation, forgetting everything else, was extraordinarily at one. Very shrewdly the Government issued immediately, on 5th August, a White Paper of information about the recent days. It had all the desired effect on the public mind. There set forth were Grey's strenuous efforts to induce a pause, to assemble a conference, to make Europe think; there on the other side was the obstinate deafness of Austria. But, far more effective, there set forth was the German Ambassador's conversation with Grey late on 29th July, his cloudy excuses about Belgium, and his suggestion that if Germany made no territorial demands on France in Europe, making colonies the price of defeat, England might agree to come to an understanding and remain neutral. Though the bullying of Belgium soon became the popular justification for war, the first was this attempt to bargain us out of our *entente* with France, the obvious implication that Great Britain would like to dodge the war if she could, and would leave France to fight for her life, if a few diplomatic phrases could be invented to excuse us. The insult may, in the strain of the moment, have been unconscious; it was none the less real.

The Government had done another shrewd thing. Lord Kitchener, who had in 1911 returned as Agent-General in Egypt to the scenes of his first triumph, happened to be in England in the summer of 1914 making holiday. He was actually at Dover on his way back when, on 3rd August, the Prime Minister stopped him with a telegram. On 5th August it was announced that he had become Secretary of State for War. Nothing

could have more satisfied the public. He had a great reputation, and the best of it was that he stood for a master of organisation. His crushing of the Mahdi in 1899 had been said to be the fruit of years of infinite pains in detail; his clearing up of the South African war had been attributed to his capacity for creating a perfect military machine, patiently and persistently mopping up the guerrilla struggle. The picture of him in the popular mind—big, strong, impenetrable, uncommunicative and masterful—was exactly the thing to create confidence now. A genius at making armies and keeping them at fighting pitch; uninterested, it was thought, in anything but the army; above all entirely clear of politics, his was the very figure to set in the public eye. Politicians, people felt, might pursue their ways; if “K” did not like them, they would be stopped.

The appointment was shrewd in other ways too. It was so dramatically right that it “blanketed” all the talk about the necessity now for a Coalition government. On the Opposition side some newspapers had been writing as if there could be no doubt; more generally there was an expectation, without going so far as this, that the Ministry would make some definite proposal to Opposition leaders. Nothing of the kind happened. The Prime Minister received gratefully assurances of Unionist and Irish support, and carried on. But it may be questioned whether, without Lord Kitchener, he could have done so. That stroke by itself put party feeling aside.

One curious aspect of the beginning of war is the way in which its coincidence with the August holiday acted as a piece of good fortune, not only in certain specific restraints which it imposed, but also in a more general way by giving time for a reflective pause. The nation could draw together far better than if war had

come upon it in the midst of its normal occupations ; and it was also an advantage that in any case August is a month in which trade and business are accustomed to running rather slackly. The country thus in its prolonged Bank Holiday watched the first movements, slight as yet, of the machine of war. Railways were taken over with a singular smoothness, which now revealed the fact that the Committee of General Managers acting under the Board of Trade had long existed on paper ; lorries and horse-transport were put under requisition, and official stencil-marks appeared on tradesmen's and farmers' carts and vans. But of course the restraints which a mere prolongation of the holiday imposed were the most important gain. Keeping the banks closed had undoubtedly been intended in the first place to prevent their being caught suddenly by a universal demand for cash ; panic withdrawal of money might have been comparatively small, but since there would have been a natural tendency to think it wise to have a bit more than usual in pocket the banks would have been strained, and the sight of much withdrawing might easily have started panic. That was avoided, and time was given for people to reflect that after all there was no special need for a lot of cash. Also the Government had time to announce and prepare for a substitution of paper currency for gold ; the £1 and 10s. notes, of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice on 5th August, were ready to be handed over the counters of the banks when they reopened on the 7th ; later in the year the £1 note numbered A000,001 was sold and resold for the Red Cross, reaching a price of about £250.

Quite as important was the fact that the holiday conditions helped to steer us fairly clear, though not quite clear, of panic food-hoarding. Some there was, but as, with banks and shops closed, people could



neither get an unusual amount of money, nor do much shopping with what they had, common-sense had time to assert itself. Yet not without a few days of anxiety. There were many cases in every rank of people convinced that there must be a bad pinch, and rushing to buy all the supplies they could lay hands on. Stories were told of houses packed to the attics with provisions, of grocers' shops cleared out, of motor-cars sent round from shop to shop, even from town to town, to pile up reserves in country houses. Nor were the stories only of those with plenty of money to spend. In poorer streets and villages people were doing the same thing on a small scale. The first reaction was the attempt of tradesmen, sincere enough for the most part, though here and there it edged over into profit-making, to conserve their stocks by putting up prices. But that was obviously too rough and ready; it made the people who had decently refrained from over-buying suffer for their restraint, and the Ministry hastily set up a Food Prices Committee. This had no power to enforce a scale of prices; but even the publication of a "recommended" scale had its effect, for the public practically enforced these prices itself; a sound social spirit had sprung up quite astonishingly. This Committee was the first mild move towards a food control which never became quite complete; the only compulsion of the moment in this direction was that at this early date the Government did take complete control of the supplies of one foodstuff—sugar.

Of a different kind of commodity they had also taken control—news. There was dead silence about the one fact that everybody wanted to know: had the army crossed to France? Later on people began to discover that there had been silence about a good many other things. They did not know yet how many of the Territorial Army, mobilised at the time for their annual training (another of the lucky strokes for us of the war

coming at the beginning of August) had been moved to posts of defence; nor that the Eastern Counties were already under restrictions; nor that the lighthouses were unlit. A Press censorship had been set up, under Mr F. E. Smith, and the papers were zealous in loyalty to it even before it had quite found its feet. The public, too, was loyal enough in agreeing to silence; but by a very obvious connection grew agitated about other ensurings of secrecy. Since for five or six years past there had been very short intervals without espionage trials on one side and the other, each producing its crop of indignation about the number of Germans and Austrians who had found employment in this country, a strong revival now of expostulation was inevitable. The Government made some reassuring statements of an intentionally vague kind, and the outcry was not as yet virulent.

The far more immediate interest was Lord Kitchener's appeal on 9th August for 100,000 men. Here was something to be busy about, the first definite gesture which the country could make. It had an accompaniment which provided quite as much subject for talk: he had intimated that enlistment would be "for four years or the duration of the war," and that set every tongue wagging. It was from so many points of view extraordinary; true, the Boer War had lasted three years, but only because two of them had dragged out in guerrilla fighting impossible in a European war; how could a clash of trained professional armies last for four years? Again, financially such a prospect was inconceivable. Our first vote of credit was for £100,000,000; if that was to be the scale, mere monetary exhaustion would set in all round within a year at most. Finally everything in the swift German attack, which would not even refrain from violating Belgium, was pointing to tactics and expectations like those of

1870-1871, a rapidly pushed stroke for decision. And yet it was Kitchener, the uncommunicative and the experienced, who was talking of four years. Few people believed him; this surely was his genius for slow, patient preparation rather over-reaching itself. So "duration" started on its career as a jest, to remain, in the incalculable British way, a jest in dark days when it looked like meaning even more than four years.

The other national response to the crisis besides recruiting was "business as usual." This was not quite as foolish as it came to sound later on. If a rush on the banks had been avoided, and if the public mind was beginning to steady itself about food supplies, there remained the possibility, also in its way a danger, of too much abstention from spending. Under the shadow of the tremendous strain on the Exchequer, and of the rising prices that restriction of supplies must bring, it was thought, people might well decide to go very cautiously, cut down their expenditure, and so, with the best will in the world, make life harder for hands put out of employment. Thus advertising, always eager for a new note, found one in the appeal to enable firms to go on keeping people in receipt of wages, and the old game of commercial competition clad itself in the patriotic mantle of "carrying on" to save labour from distress. The conviction of hard times ahead was so strong that a Relief Fund launched in the names of the Queen and the Prince of Wales met a lavish response, and reached a total of £3,000,000 in a couple of months. The odd thing was that it was very little called upon for its original purpose. Modern war proved to have such utterly unexpected results that, instead of distress, there was almost too much prosperity among those for whom the fund had been intended. Not only did manufacture run into channels demanding more and more, not less and less, labour; other spectres

of distress turned out to be equally baseless. There was alarm first about the seaside and holiday places, since no one would be spending on holidays, and then about University towns and all lodging-house quarters, losing the young population that would now go into the army. No one could possibly foresee how training camps, hospital and convalescent camps, officers cadet corps and huge munition settlements would more than make up the loss. The Relief Fund was in the end mainly directed to Red Cross purposes.

Our own first war news came, as everyone expected, from the navy. On 6th August H.M.S. *Amphion* was sunk by a mine in the North Sea, but she had just been engaged in sinking a minelayer; and three days later H.M.S. *Birmingham* sank a submarine. The first brush with the enemy was not unsatisfactory. In the next ten days there was little but the news from Belgium of the German advance. This was taken as inevitable; "little Belgium," gallant as she was, must fall back on her inner forts, and there could be no attempt to hold up the grey legions on the frontier; Namur was the strong point which would give them pause. Meanwhile the French had made a counter-stroke across another frontier and were in Lorraine; and on the 18th we had at last the news that the main portion of the British Expeditionary Force had landed in France without loss or difficulty. Then suddenly in a new sense the war began. The French stroke in Lorraine was ineffective; the Belgian Government retired to Antwerp, and the Germans occupied Brussels on the 21st; by the 24th Namur, instead of holding out, had fallen. That was the first real dismay. It was followed within two days by the accounts of the destruction of Louvain, and this exploded in a violent outburst all the reports of German atrocity which had for some days past been gaining currency. For refugees from Belgium had been coming

into England since the 20th, and had brought with them stories of their wrecked villages, of ruthless handling of anything that could be called resistance to the advancing troops, of hasty and wholesale executions of peasants and townsfolk because some individuals had been foolishly violent. The burning of Louvain brought all this to a head, and caught the minds even of those who had held their judgment suspended about horrors reported by scared and worn-out fugitives of the type that had hitherto reached England. The evidence now was very different ; and that which might have been left to sink back into its place as mere atrocity-mongering spread wildly under the appearance of a decent and righteous indignation. That a few cases of sniping by civilians, contrary to the laws of war, should be met by firing a beautiful city, and the destruction of one of the famous libraries of the world, seemed to leave no answer to those who had been saying that the Germans intended to fight with every weapon of brutality, and to show themselves too clear-headed to bring into war a civilised mentality. Efficient war must exploit every frightfulness. That, then, was your great German nation, and the "Kultur" which was its claim to force its leadership upon Europe. And *The Times* picked up another catchword of the bitter and angry passions when it headed its leading article on Louvain "The March of the Huns." For a long time nothing was too ghastly for most of the public to believe. For some reason bitterness began to fasten upon the Crown Prince even more than upon the Kaiser. His was the figure most exploited in cartoons of brutality or looting or bullying, his face in them growing foxier and foxier as time went on, more leering, more feebly conceited.

The voices of those who protested against the dreadful readiness to believe anything of the enemy were drowned. For "stricken Belgium" was the cry to

rouse England, and there was a worried feeling that England was only half-awake. Lord Kitchener, making his first speech in the Lords on 26th August, with a careful adherence to the sheet of paper in his hands, which confirmed everyone's faith in his remoteness from speech-making, amplified but very slightly the news of the army's landing, and announced that the 100,000 men he had asked for were "practically secured." But already they were not nearly enough, and the newspapers had begun to talk about "slackers." Rich people were urged to see that their footmen and gardeners, chauffeurs, gamekeepers and valets went where they were needed, and the hoardings broke out into posters of appeal. A few days later this first wave of worried anxiety rose to its height with the publication on Sunday, 30th August, of the news that the whole French and British forces were in retreat across France and the Germans advancing upon Paris. This was a shocking and awful lifting of the veil. It came, by way of America, without a word of preparation, with no single touch of professional explanation to lighten the "pitiful story," as *The Daily Mail* called it. The next day the Government were hotly assailed: surely there should either have been some preliminary warning that the earliest news might be difficult to understand, or the silence should have been kept a little longer till the news had some kind of perspective; how had such a baldly grim story been allowed to be our very first vision of our army? It appeared that the Press Bureau, properly approached before the articles were published, had decided that the shock would be counterbalanced by the stimulus to recruiting, and had therefore permitted publication. Such soothing as the military comments could give the public mind were hastily applied; by the time the French Government left Paris for Bordeaux on 3rd September people had calmed

themselves to the view that even if the Germans reached Paris the war was not over, as in 1870-1871, for the Allied forces were intact, and the moral effect of the occupation of Paris would be comparatively slight.

All the same, the entirely unfortunate manner of the first publication of the retreat from Mons had a disastrous result. Coming on top of the stories of German atrocities, it must be held very largely responsible for a lamentable embittering of the nation, for the "hounding" element in the recruiting pressure, for a state of mind which, if the truth be told, robbed us of the dignity of France. It had not been ours to meet the war with the simple and direct movements of a military nation, the mobilisation *affiches*, the systematic concentrations of men, the instantaneous change of front from the mixed civilian life to the clear war-categories. And now we were not even allowed the dignity of adjusting ourselves to a supreme crisis in calmness of mind or confidence. Those first few weeks must in any case have been weeks of uncertain steps along strange paths; they need not have been fretted as well.

With this sudden exposure of what was going on behind the official silence came one of the most peculiar incidents of the war—the epidemic of rumour that Russian troops had been passing through England for the Western Front. All along there had been comment on the vast forces which Russia could bring into play, and a profound belief in the crushing effect of her sheer weight if only the necessarily slow-moving bulk could bring itself to bear before the Germans could free themselves, by an overwhelming rush in the West, to confront the "steam-roller" in the East. This belief fastened greedily upon the welcome rumour; the Russian weight was coming in on both sides. The astonishing thing was the highly specific character and unquestionable

authenticity of a very large number of definite accounts of an occurrence that simply never occurred. People of the most undoubted veracity and intelligence had actually seen trains full of troops which were not there. At first the authorities kept silence; anything that cheered up the public was all to the good. Later, as denials were put about, explanations were attempted: a train or two of troops from the far north of Scotland, types strange to English eyes, had undergone an uncontrollable exaggeration. But the whole incident is really inexplicable; it amounted to, and must be left as, a national hallucination. Not even the confirmatory fact, invented as a joke and widely taken with perfect gravity, that people had seen the snow of their native land still on the soldiers' boots, could ridicule the rumours out of existence.

This was the distraction of a rather blank and anxious week. Hardly any more news came from France until the reports on 7th September that the Germans were "neglecting Paris," and on the 9th that "the tide was turning." The battles of the Marne and the Aisne had begun. The publication on the 11th of the first of General French's despatches certainly turned the tide at home, with their revelation of the courage and tenacious skill of the long fighting retreat, their stories of German masses held up by perfect fire-control, and of the triumphant steadiness with which highly disciplined regiments had come through the terribly testing operations as an unbroken army still. The "pitiful story" became a magnificent one, the operations, if alarming, comprehensible and coherent; there had been no rout or fatal failure, and a more cheerful energy could go into all the activities at home.

These were numerous by now. Old organisations of every kind were finding new work in relieving distress, in providing temporary employment, in ameliorating



conditions at the hastily run-up training camps for the recruits. New organisations were few as yet, but suffragists, responding to the amnesty which had been declared at the outbreak of war for all suffragists and other political prisoners, were turning their societies into Women's Emergency Corps and other such bodies. Above all, there were two great channels for energy. One was hospital work. Many great houses had been promptly offered as hospitals and convalescent homes, women were flocking in thousands to be trained as Voluntary Aid Detachments under the Red Cross, and *The Times* was starting a fund to provide motor-ambulances and surgical appliances, and to finance all the vast expansion of the regular military medical service that would be called for. The other pressure, more unexpectedly urgent, was the need for dealing with the Belgian refugees. They were coming now in a stream of 300 or 400 a day, and a War Relief Committee set itself up, with headquarters in some empty premises in Aldwych, to find them accommodation and food.

For a moment attention went back to politics. The prolonged session was about to end, and subjects which had disappeared behind the complete absorption in the war emerged again. When Mr Asquith announced that the Ministry did not intend to lose the fruits of the Parliament Act, and would place the Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment Bills on the Statute Book, suspending their operation, however, until after the close of the war, the House fell back for a day or two into something like its old inflamed state. Violent things were said about this taking advantage of the Opposition's abstention from party action, this "crowning abuse of the patriotism of the country." Not even the plea of the wisdom of such a response to the loyalty with which Nationalist Ireland had on the whole come into the war could prevent feeling running high ; and it was therefore

a happy inspiration which led Mr Will Crooks, at the moment of prorogation, to ask the Speaker if he would be in order in starting the National Anthem, which he forthwith did. That slight incident was just enough to send members away in a happier and quieter temper.

There was by now a regular, though very small, supply of news from France. Just at the first turn of the tide, Press correspondents had been able to go out to Meaux, and other places close behind the firing line. But as the battle fairly joined the military hand shut down, and nothing came through but a brief daily *communiqué* from French Headquarters, supplemented a little later by descriptive articles from "an eyewitness" at British Headquarters, well-written stuff kept back until a safe interval had passed and the narrative of events could convey no useful information to the enemy. It was not much to have, but it was enough to let people who remembered their Boer War habits buy large maps, and pin little flags here and there upon them when any place was mentioned in the *communiqués*. Maps of the Eastern Front, with all their puzzling names, came also into play, for battle had been joined there too, and the wireless German *communiqués* were fairly ample. Antwerp was holding out, and British marines had been landed at Ostend. The public could take now with some dignity in its sorrow the loss of three cruisers, *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy*, in the North Sea; a submarine had torpedoed one of them, and then got both the others as they stood by to help. More and more, as the news from France told of retreating Germans and advancing Allies, the sting went out of the first shock; and it was with pride that *The Times* published on 1st October the text of the Kaiser's Army Order, of which there had previously been some reports, giving the Expeditionary Force the name that was to become

a cherished distinction—"General French's contemptible little army."

Already the survival of that little army in face of the overwhelming German millions was taking on a touch of the marvellous, and even of the supernatural. From soldiers' letters, from the talk of wounded men at home, there spread gradually a story of heroic shining figures, heavenly figures, who had at a critical moment of the fighting near Mons been seen by our men interposing their immortal mistinesses protectively between the opposing lines and baffling the German advance. Thus, in the twentieth century, the gods and goddesses who saved their chosen heroes on the windy plains of Troy, the "Great Twin Brethren" of the battle of Lake Regillus, came to life again in the persistent legend of "the angels of Mons." Superstition, as the war went on, found plenty of scope in the stories of wayside crucifixes remaining miraculously unharmed when everything round them was shattered and riven by shell-fire; in the pictures of the *Virgin* of Albert hanging precariously from the top of the battered church steeple, yet never falling, and so on. It began with this profoundly believed legend of angels, which to thousands and thousands of people actually hallowed the exploits of the "Old Contemptibles."

The training camps were alive with the same gay ironic spirit as that which made the old army catch up this name. Luckily the summer and autumn were unusually fine, and the scores of thousands of young men hastily barracked in schoolrooms and institutes, or camped in tents, at first with no uniforms or rifles, and gradually becoming a motley crowd in mingled khaki, plain clothes, and an ugly obsolete blue uniform with a little "fore and aft" cap of which some supplies had been disinterred to serve for the moment, kept up their amazing spirits, drilled and did physical exercises

and route-marched all day long, and made the very best of patchy meals and hard and dusty sleeping. The oddest, happiest friendships were made in the mixed ranks of those days, to last till the bloody end which came to nearly all of them ; they were the seeds of the hope that after the war we could never go back to the old mistrust and hostility between classes which had for months shared so cheerily the polishing of buttons, the hungry excitement of "dinner up," the learning of one another's sense of humour, and the long sleepy talks made poignant by the bugles blowing "Last Post" and "Lights Out." Even in the after years, when the pleasant hopes had faded, nothing could spoil the gallant memory of those first recruits. They were the great feature of this autumn in England, the men of Hardy's poem :

"What of the faith and fire within us,  
Men who march away ?"

For who had not watched them passing, their clouds of dust powdering the green and gold of the hedges ? Few as they were beside the floods of enlisted men of the later years, they seemed to be everywhere ; hardly a village that had not seen some company of them swinging through it ; no town that had not seen its squads marching to the station under some old sergeant. Brown and fit and happy to have "done it," they sang their way along, most often to the neat marching lilt of the sentimental *Tipperary*, sometimes with the irony about themselves they never lost :

"Send out my mother, my sister and my brother,  
But for God's sake don't send me."

The one thing they never would do was to march to the admirable words and tunes which cultured people provided for them. Where most of the words they sang

came from nobody ever knew ; where the tunes came from was often only too obvious : there are few metres for which you cannot find a hymn tune.

They were happy men, but they were not enough ; and another bout of bad news early in October led to fresh recruiting pressures. On the 8th, Antwerp had been assailed with the first storm of a heavy bombardment. Just as it was known that two naval brigades, hurriedly constructed by Mr Churchill out of the new recruits, had been landed there, came the news of the evacuation of the town, and then of the abandonment of all its defences. It fell on the 9th ; and the naval brigades after firing hardly a shot could not all be re-embarked, and large numbers of them had to retreat to internment in Holland. Mr Churchill was heavily criticised for this hasty gesture of support for the Belgians, since it could in any case have done little for them and ended by losing us some hundreds of men. An immediate result of these events was a bigger flood than ever of Belgian refugees, for now that Antwerp had fallen it seemed doubtful whether any scrap of Belgian soil would escape the invader. Ostend and the other coast towns emptied rapidly, and many of the inland inhabitants, who had felt comparatively safe while Antwerp held out, waited no longer. The news that the French Government had offered its hospitality to the Belgian Court and Government, and that they had moved to Le Havre, quickened this flight, until refugees were coming into Folkestone at the rate of 1200 to 2000 a day.

For a week or two the newspapers made the utmost of the Eastern Front. To the end we never knew much of the real conditions there, or envisaged easily the vast areas over which the armies were operating. Moreover we kept on thinking at this time in terms of " battles." So the experts who in various newspapers analysed, in

the old Boer War fashion, the daily *communiqués* worked out visions of German armies on the Niemen and Austrians round Cracow caught in the vast toils of the Russian millions, their fronts broken up and their armies giving way. Hindenburg was being "routed." Cracow was falling. But attention was soon back in the West. The Allies were advancing no more, the Germans were attacking again, and heavy fighting developing all round Lille. With Ostend in German hands since mid-October a new idea suddenly illuminated the headlines and the war maps—"The Fight for the Road to Calais." That was what, to people at home, the struggle became; if it were lost, a new Napoleon would be camping his armies by the narrow Channel for invasion. Or if not for that—if our fleet still availed to save us, as a century before—there were perils which we had not faced then. Modern guns would carry the distance; so near a base for Zeppelins and aeroplanes would put all England at their mercy. That danger had become more vivid after the first dropping of bombs on Paris at the end of September; and this was why there was such delighted enthusiasm later in the year when British planes bombed the Zeppelin headquarters at Friedrichshafen. This, too, accounts for the outbreak just now of a new scare akin to spy-hunting. There were stories, soon after the German occupation of Ostend, of the discovery at Dunkirk of concrete beds, which, laid a few years earlier with a great appearance of innocence as the floors of villas, were now discovered to be so immensely solid that they could be nothing but foundations for big guns, prepared beforehand by the omnipresent treacherous German. If this had happened at Dunkirk, it had probably happened at Calais and Boulogne; indeed it must have, for guns capable of shelling England would need such bases. And thence it was but a short step to tales of suspicious concrete

floors in England, awaiting the German invaders who would know where to find them. The scare had a long run ; it put Scotland Yard to work, and was not even damped by the conclusive reports of artillery experts, who had inspected these places, and tried to make clear to civilians how impossible it was that the very scientific and prolonged work of constructing a big-gun platform could ever be disguised as the mere laying of a concrete floor. People went on hunting, for it was an irresistible temptation to ingenuity ; and inevitably the whole spy scare revived, with endless tales of mysterious use of lights at night, and with the first hints of wireless installations concealed in chimneys. The notorious "Hymn of Hate," of which the words were published about now, was dragged into the business ; a nation which went to war like that could not possibly have any innocent subjects, and every German name must mean a hidden enemy. More especially the outcry turned against highly placed or wealthy persons of foreign origin still allowed to live in London or in such danger-spots as the Eastern Counties. One result before long was that Prince Louis of Battenberg, though everyone who knew anything knew how entirely devoted to his profession he was, resigned the post of First Sea Lord. "My birth and parentage," he wrote with dignity, "have the effect of impairing in some respects my usefulness on the Board of Admiralty." He was succeeded by Lord Fisher, exactly the man to suit public opinion, for he was in the popular mind the navy's counterpart of Lord Kitchener at the War Office. Very different in character, far from uncommunicative and impenetrable, he was yet thought of in the same way as the ruthless genius of organisation, damning all politicians and caring for nothing but the service.

The possibility of the Germans reaching Calais produced a busy discussion of the position of civilians

under invasion. The presence of swarms of Belgian refugees, who had actually undergone the humiliation of helplessly watching an enemy march over their land, made the discussion full of meaning. What it came to turn on in the end was the question whether the Government could not give civilians who were still able-bodied, if unfit for the army, some status which would let them fight at the last; and that question came down to a specific point, the recognition of the Volunteer Training Corps, which had sprung up all over the country. They were largely scoffed at; what good could they possibly be, and what chance would they have of ever acquiring arms? Masses of the new army recruits were still without rifles. The place for the more elderly able-bodied was where thousands by this time were serving, in the Special Constabulary. That had been organised since 17th August, the calling up of the Reserves having depleted the police ranks most seriously, and the enrolled men were on duty at waterworks, shipyards, gas and electric-light works, and were beginning to do some street duty. If an elderly man wanted to serve, this was his way to give up his time, break his night's rest, and face weariness and the weather. But though this might give scope enough in big towns it gave none in small towns or country places, and the Volunteer Training movement went on. The War Office authorities were dead against it; they probably did not desire in any case to complicate their plans for meeting invasion by having to include in them great numbers of amateur soldiers; they strongly objected to any organisation which might give the shelter of a sort of military service to men whom they wanted to see in the army, and in this they had a great deal of public support. So, though the Central Committee of the V.T.C. succeeded after a while in extracting a red armlet from the authorities, they had to wait some time before any kind of uniform



for them was sanctioned, and they never escaped from a certain amount of ridicule.

The recruiting pressure was rising in intensity. Such a figure as 100,000 meant nothing now ; the Government were talking about a million. Colonial contingents were already raising our numbers, for the response of the Empire had been swift. Canadian units were in training camps, and many more being recruited. Australians and New Zealanders were on the way. South Africa was to belie magnificently all the apprehension which had been felt when, so short a time after the end of the Boer War, she had been given full self-government. Some echoes of that apprehension had been heard ; reviving memories of the Kaiser's telegram to the Boers in 1899 caused some anxiety lest now Boer feeling might turn against us. There was not the least sign of that in the South African Government. They set themselves to the most immediate form of assistance, taking off our hands any concern about the German colonies in Africa ; they invaded at once German South-west Africa, and prepared an expedition against German East Africa. Contingents were forming for service in France as well.

The Empire's response was used as one more stimulus to recruiting at home. The life of fit young men in civilian occupations was becoming a burden to them. Newspapers were always wanting the country roused. For though the fight for Calais was losing no ground, the casualty lists were by now beginning to reveal its price. They were small as we came to know casualty lists later, but they were drain enough then on the army as it was : the total loss in killed and wounded was given in mid-November as 57,000, and the worst of the Flanders fighting had yet to show its results. For this was when the great name of Ypres first came into the news, as the scene of a long scattered engagement rising to two intense periods, one just before the end of

October, and the other about 11th and 12th November, with the famous defeat of the Prussian Guard Corps. For some part, at least, of the embittered recruiting pressure there was the excuse that the slaughter was directly or indirectly upon so many people's nerves. Yet much of the pressure in pulpits as well as on platforms was sentimental and often revoltingly complacent; a leading article of this time could actually say: "To some of us elders the war may be a catastrophe. . . . Fortunate are our young men to be young at this time." There in a nutshell is the kind of senseless and cruel pomposity which the younger generation of the war time cannot be expected to forgive.

The truth is that through all the first period of the war to the early summer of 1915 the view of the British public was that the fighting part of the war, so to speak, was a professional business, and that the national part was backing up. The great Red Cross effort to extend the medical services; the Y.M.C.A. appeal for funds for huts to make training-camp life more comfortable; working parties everywhere making socks and mufflers for the troops; "business as usual" pleading that it provided funds for all these activities; racing as usual, football as usual (though the latter was now being heavily criticised), pleading that they refreshed and amused the workers—this was not a nation at war, but a nation supporting and encouraging part of itself at war. And that accounts for the character and temper of the recruiting pressure; it was too easy to live in all good faith in the "national" part and push other people into the other part.

It was certainly with every belief in its good faith that the nation settled down to the winter. The line taken by the newspapers for the next few months was that of a great national readiness and determination, if only the Government would understand how to handle

it. "Take us into your confidence," the leading articles kept saying: "trust us not to be panic-stricken. The nation offers its whole strength, the truth of the war situation probably is that you need it; but until you bring the truth and the nation together you will not get the strength." That argument had begun with the sparseness of news from France; it might have become less insistent with the slackening of the fight in Flanders, which was developing, as Lord Kitchener said when Parliament met again, into a form of siege warfare. But it revived vigorously with a trickle of piecemeal information early in November of the loss of a cruiser—two cruisers—some cruisers—in the South Pacific. When finally the extent of Admiral Cradock's defeat was known, the Admiralty became the scapegoat of all the outcry against over-secrecy. What of the two German cruisers, *Goeben* and *Breslau*, which, nominally interned at Constantinople, were at large under the Turkish flag since Turkey had come into the war? What about the converted merchantman, *Emden*, which had suddenly shelled Madras, and had been sinking shipping all over the Indian Ocean till she was put out of action, just about this time, by the Australian cruiser *Sydney*? What about the cruiser *Königsberg*, which might or might not be bottled up by now in an East African river? What had held back for so long the casualty lists after the sinking of *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy* if not the foolish nervousness which had at one time forbidden the newspapers to mention the opening of the large supplementary war hospitals, in case the public should be depressed? Such was the "unworthy fear of panic." It happened that the end of November saw another disaster, the blowing up of the battleship *Bulwark*, in Sheerness harbour, with the loss of about 750 lives, and this intensified the criticism. It was a startling and inexplicable affair. The authorities might

be positive that it was an accident, and talk about the still unknown dangers in storing modern explosives, but it drove the spy scare to extremes again, clamouring that it was nonsense to pretend that the disaster could not be accounted for while enemy agents were at large ; and the Admiralty's real inability to explain was attacked as more evasion and nervousness.

So the national attitude became one of offended dignity in reproach of a Government out of touch with its spirit. It took the first War Budget calmly, with the doubling of the income tax and a heavy stiffening of the duties on intoxicants ; and it handsomely oversubscribed the first War Loan of £350,000,000. It greatly modified its tone about the Eastern Front, making much, no doubt, of Hindenburg's defeat at Lodz, and of the capture of Cracow, but warning itself not to exaggerate the effects. It felt no more than the legitimate recovery of its pride when the news came that the German ships which had sunk our cruisers off Coronel had been caught and sunk themselves off the Falkland Islands ; in the rapidity and conclusiveness of this riposte the public saw with delight the authentic hand of Fisher.

It was becoming both possible and necessary to envisage a little more clearly the question of the Belgian refugees. At first there had been nothing to do but handle as well as might be the flood of arrivals, just seeing that they did not starve. But by now the stream had ceased. Great numbers were dispersed all over the country, as guests of individual people or occupying empty houses under the care of local committees. Many odd situations developed. The central committee had no time to sort out refugees for the private houses which offered hospitality, and hosts and guests found themselves often with but strained means of contact. Local committees were taken aback by finding their

kindest efforts accepted as the least that rich England could do to pay her obvious debt to Belgium ; or were harassed by discovering that, instead of being all merged in a common suffering, Belgian class feeling still had very sensitive toes to be trodden on. There was much to come of both tragic and comic misunderstanding. But for the moment what chiefly concerned the central committee, relieved of much of its pressure, but still with a great many persons hastily quartered at the Alexandra Palace, was the effort to find employment for them, partly as a means of support, but much more to take up their minds and preserve their self-respect. Rather ambitious plans of the moment, such as a scheme for planting a whole Belgian " colony " somewhere, came to nothing. The refugees, some drifting back abroad as time went on, many drafted into the Belgian army, but in the mass continuing under the care of local committees and finding occupations in the war's increasing demand for labour, ceased to be an urgent problem, and became so familiar that we were apt to forget their weariness of exile.

For the rest, the great preoccupations—the wounded, the men in the trenches, the men in the training camps—could not but grow more vivid as Christmas approached. The illustrated advertisements turned more and more into displays of what could be bought for them all. Shopping, indeed, was requiring a stimulus. The diminution of the lighting of London at night (though it was not yet in darkness) had reacted upon some kinds of spending ; theatres and restaurants were doing bad business in this first phase when there were few men on leave to entertain, and the rest of the nation was not yet feeling itself so caught into the war that it had a right to amusement. For the same reasons much other expenditure had decreased. One of the minor interests of the time is the sign of change in women's dress ;

elaborate swathings and complicated lines went suddenly out of fashion ; hats were growing smaller, waists and hips disappearing ; and altogether, though skirts were still of ankle-length, the fashion pictures for the first time begin to be something not wholly fantastic to the eyes of later young women. It all meant that costly materials, furs, expensive styles were frowned upon ; the big department stores and Bond Street itself were feeling a pinch ; the papers took to rebuking a little robustly " ostentatious retrenchments " ; and meanwhile the booming of Christmas presents for the men might help. Life in the training camps was being made more vivid by articles about the country in war-time ; life even in the trenches as vivid as it could be made by daily columns of extracts from the private letters of all ranks, and strangely telling these intensely personal little moments of the army's days and nights often were. They did much to make us familiar with the soldier's life, his amiable way of adapting foreign words to his own tongue, in place-names like " Wipers " and " Plug Street," and phrases like " Napoo " ; the invincible spirit which gave nicknames to the shells under which he suffered, like " Jack Johnson " and " Black Maria " and " Whiz-bang " ; the imperturbability with which he made trench life a sort of caricature of life at home, with London street-names stuck up as guides through the maze of trenches which could already be described as " a warren," and his perilous dug-outs called after luxurious hotels. More curious were the bits of trench slang now becoming familiar, the origin of which could never be discovered, like the name " Blighty " for England, coming in time to have the happy meaning of a wound that took one home out of the fighting ; or that expression by which the soldier so subtly eased his talking of things that often had to be talked about—" going west." Quantities of ingenious derivations in

the newspapers never really explained these phrases, any more than the French were ever able to explain why their soldiers called the Germans "Bosches" and their wine ration "pinard."

How much more familiarity with the trenches began to mean as Christmas approached! And then what quiet feelings Christmas might have brought were lost in the storm of anger when, on 16th December, German warships shelled Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby for some hours, killing over a hundred people. This was the first loss of civilian life in England, and it added violent fuel to the outcry about German atrocities; we were now to begin to suffer what the Belgians had been describing to us. For these were harmless "open" towns; the description of them in the German wireless *communiqués* as "fortified places" was resented as flagrant lying, and the subsequent excuse that there were camps in the neighbourhood mere cowardly quibbling by a navy which would not fight, but only seize a safe opportunity to dash out and murder defenceless people at long range. The attack could be nothing but "frightfulness." At this moment the announcement was made of the appointment of a committee to investigate the charges of atrocity in the German occupation of Belgium; whatever the committee might ultimately say, the public fastened upon the enemy the bitter name of "baby-killers," and fastened it the more as the early months of 1915 brought the first Zeppelin raids—at Yarmouth, Cromer and King's Lynn, on 20th January, on Tyneside and at Lowestoft in April, and at Southend in May.

All of a piece with this spirit, and taken as justifying it to the whole neutral world, came the German proclamation on 18th February stiffening their submarine warfare. Its original terms were soon much modified, as the result of protests by the United States, for Germany still had hopes of that nation. But even in

its modified form the submarine campaign remained in the popular mind as a form of "frightfulness." The feeling was that it was underhand fighting, resorted to because the German navy could not stand against ours openly; when some German warships were caught in the North Sea, on 24th January, by Admiral Beatty's cruisers, they had lost one ship, the *Blucher*, and two others had only just escaped, badly damaged. In general the use of submarines raised questions of the customs of war which were hotly discussed; it substituted for the traditional taking of prizes—practically impossible for submarines—sheer destruction of shipping and human lives. "Piracy" it was angrily called, as day after day brought news of vessels sunk round our coasts. There was as yet no grave public alarm about these losses, even though food prices were beginning to rise; wheat was up from thirty-six shillings to sixty shillings a quarter. The figures given by the Admiralty on 8th April, showing that we had lost thirty-seven merchantmen and six fishing vessels since the German proclamation, could not be taken as a serious depletion of our shipping; and there had been more surprise than any other feeling when it had come out on 9th February that the *Lusitania* had arrived in Liverpool under the American flag; it was not thought that we needed to employ such subterfuges. Still, if there was no actual alarm, there was a good deal of uneasiness as people noticed where sinking of ships were taking place. The loss of a warship, *Formidable*, on New Year's Day, was only announced as "in the Channel"; the fact that it was as far down the Channel as off Lyme Regis was not known till much later. But merchantmen were known to have been sunk off Fleetwood and elsewhere along the western and south-western coasts; and the proof that enemy submarines could operate as freely as that was uncomfortable.



The principal reason for absence of alarm was that, as no one even now had any conception of the duration of the war, this kind of destruction of shipping was not regarded as likely to bring us into real peril ; there would not be time for that. We could not get away from old-fashioned views of a war, from what we knew of past wars. There had always been a winter pause ; and this, rather than the coming of new conceptions of war, explained the deadlock of the trenches in France and Flanders. Naturally the armies had dug themselves in ; it was a kind of hibernation such as we read of in histories of the Crimea. With the spring and summer battle would return, and decisive events supervene. There was, too, something reminiscent of the Crimean War and its institution of the Victoria Cross in the announcement in the New Year Honours list of a new decoration, the Military Cross ; but this was to be more freely given, as a decoration for junior officers. Another event of this time was the raising of a regiment of Welsh Guards, to give Wales an honour which the other parts of the kingdom already possessed ; they mounted guard for the first time on St David's Day of 1915.

This notion of a mere winter pause accounts for many aspects of the public mind just now. It accounts for the spirit which could still enjoy the extravagant New Year supper-parties of the big hotels, adorned indeed with the flags of the Allies, and accompanied by the playing of various national anthems, as well as for the spirit that angrily criticised this thinly disguised pleasure-hunting. It accounts for the somewhat amused superiority with which many people regarded the innumerable committees and working parties and V.A.D. classes and parcel-sending and writing to lonely soldiers and volunteer drilling ; a great deal of useful work was being done, no doubt, but there was also a great deal of fussiness of idle people jumping at anything which could

give them some importance, and hanging, as it were, on to the skirts of a war which they could not affect in any way. It accounts, too, for the comparatively languid interest taken in events in the Near East which were coming into the war news. The Turks were threatening the Suez Canal, but this was not "the war." It was thought that across the deserts Turkey could make no very effective attack, and the Australian contingents there, stopped on their way to Europe for the defence of Egypt, could be trusted to deal with them. And when the first news came of bombardment of the Dardanelles the comment was that it was "a good touch of imagination"; it would give the Turks something else to bother them, while the Russians moved down into Asia Minor, and it gave one of our newest great battleships, *Queen Elizabeth*, a chance to try her strength.

Above all, the sense of impending decision tended to keep up all the fretted, irritable strenuousness of the people who were convinced that most other people were behaving as if they did not know that "there was a war on." The recruiting pressure, part of it growing more and more explicit as a demand for conscription, continued, in spite of the warnings that all the reproaches hurled about must be producing in Germany as well as in France the very poorest impression of our capacities and determination. One particular form taken by the pressure just now was the discussion, often in a tone which seemed hardly civilised at all, whether the younger clergy should or should not enlist as combatants. The clergy submitted themselves to the judgment of the Bishops. Against all the specious phrases about "a war for civilisation" and "a war against atrocity" the Bishops held their ground in refusing to sanction enlistment of men who had taken upon them the peculiar obligations of the ministry. But unfortunately the result

seemed to be that the ministry was more than ever anxious to blazon its "patriotism" in ways that were left to it, the pulpits and recruiting platforms; and its peculiar obligations were, with far too few exceptions, more deeply betrayed than they would have been by bearing arms. Dr Lyttelton, the Headmaster of Eton, venturing in a sermon at Westminster Abbey to plead for less hatred and hounding, had to learn himself what hounding meant.

In March the people who were so full of patriotism found a new quarry. With all the cautious phrasing of the Press censorship information began to appear about strikes of engineers on the Clyde. Here then, it was said, were people most flagrantly of all behaving as if there were no war on, striking in the nation's hour of need. As another side of the question began to come out, with the strikers' claim to some share in profits which, when people thought for a moment, must obviously be falling to the employers with enormous war contracts, the patriotic cry shifted into a general indictment of labour for slackness and bad time-keeping, and drinking habits largely responsible for those two faults. This new indignation rose rapidly, and applauded itself as well as Kitchener when, on 16th March, he made an appeal to workers to mend all their ways and throw every effort into the production of what the war required.

By the time he spoke, events had occurred which gave fresh point to his words. On 11th March had come the news of the capture of Neuve Chapelle, and "a striking British advance." For the first few days this had nothing but a heartening effect. The deadlock was loosened, all in our favour, and now was the time for the utmost effort, lest the decisive moment catch us with our strength not yet deployed; every possible man must be in the army by the summer, every ounce of work put out at home. Mr Lloyd George was meeting

the trade unionists, and his interviews were said to be "satisfactory," with assurances of full-time work and no stoppages. When Kitchener in his message to the workers spoke of having the gravest anxiety about "the supply of war material at the present time and for the next few months," his words suggested no acute difficulty; for some time past we had been hearing constantly of artillery duels, and it was natural to suppose that the beginning of more movement would require more supplies; besides, there were the big new armies to equip. The great thing was that the war was moving.

Then, about a week later, the tone changed badly. The fuller accounts of the fighting were coming, and so were the terrible casualty lists. We had moved forward, but at a frightful cost for a small advance; and the worst of it was that the messages now sent home indicated quite clearly that the war was not "moving" as people had too hastily thought, and that what had chiefly been learned was that we were only at the beginning of the experience of modern war. A sense of confusion, of a disorganised piecemeal inferno, with communications all shattered, units left "in the air," artillery out of touch, and coherent command impossible, disengaged itself from the messages; and all the promise faded out of the achievement. Worse still, the achievement almost turned into a disaster with its revelation of the terrible need for shells, and with the very disquieting impression now becoming current that some people had known of the need all along, and the public had been kept in the dark again. In a few days little was left of Neuve Chapelle but the sense of a costly—some were saying a wickedly costly—lesson; and the next two months were full of controversy, exaggerated and confused statements, angry accusations, culminating, with certain terrible incidents, in a wild rise of the

bitterest of war temper. First of all, people swung to extremes about the habits of labour. They clutched at Mr Lloyd George's facile phrase-making when he said : " We are fighting Germany, Austria, and drink, and so far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is drink." The superficiality of this was for the moment lost in its effects. Patriotic people, of the kind who in previous years had been the first to dismiss his speeches as cheaply slashing, now applauded loudly ; labour, which had enjoyed his abuse of dukes, grew hotly resentful, as well it might, now that his habits of speech laid them under a wholesale imputation of vicious self-indulgence, an imputation taken, whatever Mr Lloyd George may have intended, as applying to their class alone. A few weeks of heated argument followed. Ideas of prohibition of intoxicating liquor were in the air ; they modified into Budget proposals for drastic increase of duties to check consumption. On the other side grew a protest against exaggeration, a plea for return to a sense of proportion, recognising that drink might be an item, but was no more than that, in the problem of munitions ; and the voice of common sense, pointing out that far more harm than good might be done by suddenly cutting off all liquor from men accustomed to it in their hard work, besides the certainty that any such step would throw the country into the worst possible humour. In the end the taxation proposals were dropped, and a measure of Government control in scheduled areas was established ; but for the rest emphasis turned towards voluntary restraint, and much was expected from the example set by the King when, at the beginning of April, he ordered that till the close of the war no intoxicants were to be served in the Royal palaces. At the height of the discussion the Commons found themselves asked to account for the bland keeping open of their own bars ; and men

on leave from France had biting comments to make on civilians whose one thought, when the taxation proposals were announced, was to rush for stores of whisky before the new duties could be imposed.

Side by side with all this, other conflicts about the production of munitions were being angrily pursued. What, to begin with, was the truth? Lord Kitchener and Mr Lloyd George had appeared to indicate that Neuve Chapelle had betrayed a terribly perilous defect, an ignorance or stupidity about war conditions which had been murderous to our men at the front. Yet it was recalled that in January Lord Haldane had talked of our "great and increasing progress with regard to artillery"; now, a month after Neuve Chapelle, Mr Asquith was denying that our attacks had been crippled by lack of munitions, and that the casualty lists had been swollen by that lack; and Mr Lloyd George was giving figures of a remarkable development of munition output; if, he said, our production in September 1914 was taken at the index figure of 20, the figure for March 1915 was 388, and that by a steady growth, not a sudden burst. What were people to believe? Had there been some gross incompetence which Ministers were now trying to conceal, or was there a deep military disagreement somewhere? Again the public had the maddening sense of swinging between blank secrecy and most dismaying exposures.

The real trouble, the secret struggle in the Cabinet which was causing all this haziness and inability to get the truth out, was not fully known till long after, when war memoirs began to be published, and Mr Lloyd George's contradictory speeches could be explained in the light of his increasing engrossment with a new war career for himself. But enough was known even at the time to cast a first cloud on Lord Kitchener's popularity. Talk began to leak out of his being too autocratic,

keeping too much in his own hands the information from the army commanders, concealing facts out of professional jealousy of civilian interference, so that his colleagues were left to speak in this bewildering way. *The Times* managed to be frank enough : "The War Office," it wrote, "has sought to do too much . . . it cannot hope to organise a nation which its own chief has in many ways curiously failed to understand." The latter phrase hinted at the standing suspicion that news was suppressed or "doctored" for fear of alarming the public. The former phrase summed up the general feeling now emerging from the munitions controversy : it was not merely a question of trade union labour, it was one of properly organising the whole nation. Not only the War Office but the Government as a whole had sought to do too much. Mr Bonar Law had been asking why use was not made of the business man ; newspapers were urging the organising of the employer instead of concentrating on the habits of the wage-earner. The first response was little but a sop to the outcry, when a business man, Mr Booth, was appointed to a new War Office committee on munitions. This would not do. The point was that the War Office must no longer try to keep this matter as purely military ; its business as a department was to organise armies ; for the rest, it should state its requirements and leave them to others to supply. A more adequate response was the appointment on 16th April of an outside committee on munitions, mainly composed of the heads of great engineering firms, with Mr Lloyd George as chairman.

But the public was far too upset to be satisfied by such steps. It was avenging its sense of a general futility partly in carpings at the Government for not telling it what to do, partly in more abject ways. Anger about German methods of warfare, with all the civilian

casualties in the naval and airship raids and the submarine campaign, turned to ill-tempered nagging about the treatment of German prisoners of war in England ; a bitter clamour to punish their country through them, and assertions that they were made more comfortable than they deserved, finally went as far as accusations that the Prime Minister and his wife were closely, and even treacherously, interested in officers interned at Donington Hall, and no rumour was too ugly for credence. All that Lord Haldane had done for the army, and the fact that it was his reorganisation which had enabled us to enter on the war even as effectively as we had, was overwhelmed now in the silly reminders that he had had much of his early education in Germany, and a phrase he had once used, a phrase to the effect that Germany was his spiritual home, was flung against him, with no reference to its context. "Hounding" was again finding a quarry.

Into all this recrimination fell the news of the landing of troops at the Dardanelles ; Gallipoli was a word that we only began to use later. The news was not wholly a surprise. Since the first bombardment of the forts at the Narrows there had been plenty of rumour of a Dardanelles expedition, plenty of rumour too of divisions in the Cabinet about it. On the whole opinion was against it, criticising Mr Churchill for being headstrong again as he had been in the Antwerp expedition, and forcing through his policy even when Cabinet dissension had gone far to wreck it. For the news that the landing had been "strongly opposed" obviously meant that, if Mr Churchill's plans had been divided and delayed, they had better have been given up ; the bombardment had merely given the Turks a couple of months' warning. And the argument that the expedition was a dangerous distraction of force from the real theatre of decision grew very strong when the day that brought the news



of the landing brought also news of another heavy German attack near Ypres. This was "the fight for Calais" again; it might be the decisive fight, and we were throwing away thousands of men.

Then in the week that followed even the terrible cost of the Gallipoli landing, more and more bloodily revealed as the longer accounts came through, was eclipsed by a new horror. The early reports of the renewed fighting round Ypres had given as the main reason for the loss of ground by both the French and ourselves that the troops had been driven out of the trenches by clouds of asphyxiating gas.<sup>1</sup> The immediate outburst of anger at this was strong enough. Here was another proof that the enemy would stick at nothing, another gross rupture of solemn undertakings; for civilised nations had agreed at The Hague Conferences to abstain from the use of poison gases in warfare. Was there no limit to German abominations? But this immediate anger was nothing beside the fury of lacerated feeling when articles began to appear describing the peculiarly dreadful suffering and slow agonised dying that gas inflicted. The terrible thing was that this kind of agony permitted of published detail which would have been impossible in the case of torturing mutilation by shell-fire; so that nothing was spared of the visions of men convulsed, discoloured and ghastly in the appalling and hopeless fight for breath. Never again in the war was there horror quite so rending as that.

Even before the worst descriptions came through, counter-measures had been taken. Dr J. S. Haldane had been sent over instantly to diagnose the nature of the gas, and had reported it as some form of chlorine or bromine. The German troops coming on behind the gas wave had been observed to be wearing respirator-

<sup>1</sup> "Eyewitness" had mentioned the expectation of some such thing in a message published about a fortnight earlier.

pads over the mouth, and an appeal was issued for the provision of similar pads for our men. These were easily made, and within two or three days an ample supply had been received. But they were only a primitive precaution, and a week later it was announced that the War Office was considering forms of defensive equipment, which took shape as the once-familiar "P.H." helmet of greyish flannel impregnated with protective solution, and provided with talc eye-pieces. It was an awkward safeguard, for the long neck-piece had to be very carefully tucked into the collar all round, and this was a slow cumbrous job for a man loaded with his equipment. But it served its purpose while the use of gas was still occasional and experimental.

Besides the physical horror of the gas attack its effect had revived all the anxiety about the holding of our ground and a possible break-through to Calais. Immediate apprehensions were soon stilled. Trenches might be cleared in this way, but troops advancing behind gas had to be slow and cautious; the business came back to fighting in the end, and then we gave way no more. The line round Ypres had been bent in a little; that was all. And again the Germans were accused of being cowardly quibblers, for in their *communiqués* they were justifying themselves by asserting that the Allies had been on the point of making use of poison gas themselves, whereas it must be obvious that if this had been true we should not have been taken wholly by surprise and unprovided with the respirator-pads the Germans had used. But this raised the other point which was now discussed: were we going to retaliate in kind, and use poison gas ourselves? We were in fact using it a few months later.

Upon the very height of this horror came another—the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7th May with the loss of over a thousand lives. At this the rage against all of

enemy blood broke loose. Mobs in London and other towns attacked hundreds of shops and restaurants which bore German or Austrian names, so thoroughly that for a day or two there was something like a bread famine in East and South London, where very many of the bakers were of these nationalities. Nor was it mob action only; bodies like the Royal Exchange, the Baltic, and other such organisations in London and elsewhere, intimated to members of German or Austrian birth that they had better absent themselves; and every form of exasperated spy-hunting and denunciation was rife. The Government, under attacks in the Commons which revealed the very large numbers of enemy aliens still at large in the country, some 40,000, had just admitted that new circumstances had arisen and called for much stronger action, when the report of the committee on German atrocities in Belgium drove feeling to white heat. The committee, which included men of such cautious minds as Lord Bryce and Mr H. A. L. Fisher, found that there was evidence of indefensible massacres of civilians, looting and rape; and even evidence of what quiet people had been most reluctant to believe—the use of women and children as screens for advancing troops, and murders by crucifixion. The attacks on enemy aliens developed into such violence that troops had to be called out. The Prime Minister spoke of “internment on a huge scale,” and plans were immediately announced for incarcerating almost every enemy alien in the country; exemption henceforth would be very jealously granted.

The public mind was at the fever-pitch which ended this first stage of the war. Fighting on all the fronts was acute; at Arras, in the Lens—La Bassée sector, at Festubert, British troops were gaining ground; in Gallipoli we were making good the heroic landing; but on the Eastern Front Mackensen was badly breaking

the Russian lines in Galicia. By mid-May Italy was in the crisis of decision, and by the 24th she had come in on the side of the Allies, and declared war. After the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the killing of so many and such prominent American citizens what would the United States do? This was not a new question; common public opinion had been impatient enough already with what it regarded as the failure of the other great English-speaking country to rise to its duty. Now even those who had not these easy views, but understood something of the mixed character of the population of the United States, and its traditionally aloof policy, and could conceive that financially and in other ways that country might be of far more value as a non-combatant, began to think that German submarine warfare might well drive the States into hostilities.

So an impression of crisis all round, coming on top of the storm of rage at German methods and of the revelation from all the fronts of what intense prolonged effort victory in modern warfare would exact, brought to a kind of culmination the gnawing sense that we had gone to war confusedly, weakly, with energies so ill-directed that they were dislocating, instead of co-ordinating, the nation's strong limbs. Impulses were pushing in one direction; in every phase of life there were sensible reasons and arguments pulling in another. Young men were wanted for other work than sitting on office stools; but business must not be disorganised and trade impoverished by hasty recourse to untrained substitutes; chauffeurs and men-servants would be better in training camps, many more farm-hands might be spared, but families must not be suddenly deprived of wage-earners; women's capacities on the land could not reach beyond dairying, and it would be shortsighted patriotism to take boys from their schooling.

A few women were coming into business ; very few as yet were replacing chauffeurs ; some clubs—even the Athenæum—had made the experiment of introducing parlourmaids into their staff. This mental conflict, the state of mind that could even argue about conscription on a basis of historical constitutional rights of the Crown and the individual, made a poor showing beside the clear-cut drafting of men in a militarist nation ; but then it could be argued that no small part of our contribution to the war was to preserve civilian resources for the war supplies and the finance of the Allies ; and we should therefore fail in our duty, rather than perform it, if we eased our minds impulsively by conscription, and drained our business world as France had had to drain hers. All the difficulties came in the end to the one cry of the moment : the Government had no right to leave the country in this tangle of personal and individual decision ; it must say what people should do ; it must allot the tasks ; it must “ mobilise the nation.” And this was increasingly the specific loudly urged for the industrial troubles. There was no striking for the time being ; but in certain districts the men were said to be but sullenly and slackly at work. If the nation were mobilised, then industry would be as distinctly active service as the army, war profits would cease and the discontent about them, factories would be under discipline. Granted that our peculiar duty was more complicated than that of France, as being a deliberate mixture of military and civilian effort, new in the world’s history, there was all the more need for some new kind of “ regimenting ” of the nation.

And all the while that these currents of dissatisfaction and uneasiness were concentrating in that single idea other currents of public affairs were concentrating too, and political uneasiness turning in a single direction. The early mishandling of war news in an alternation

of dead silence and alarming announcements was being paralleled maddeningly in the fog that overhung the shell controversy. The Dardanelles expedition was suspected, if not known, to have been weakened by disagreements far too vital to the nation to be properly left to a party Cabinet. In the matter of enemy aliens the Government had been far too lenient ; in the matter of national service, far too dilatory. What all this came to was that the first patriotic impulse in Parliament, suspending all opposition, had in fact unwittingly tended to atrophy our central motive power. Everything was in the hands of a single party group, with its far too personal outlook, and with no possibility of adequate criticism, counter-suggestion, or introduction of other points of view : there could be none with so one-sided a control of all the facts. In the earlier stage of the shell controversy the inclination of the Press had been to make of these considerations an urgent demand for complete and frank information. Since this country worked through a Cabinet responsible to Parliament, it could work healthily only if Parliament had all the knowledge necessary for control. And *The Times*, remarking that "the time for a Coalition had gone by," seemed to be playing for the ordinary party change of Government. Then suddenly a new kind of demand became explicit ; it dates from the announcement, on 18th May, that "Lord Fisher had not attended at the Admiralty for the last two days." If the Government were falling into open disagreement, then the last possible plea for a party Cabinet, that of cohesion, had gone. So the political uneasiness began to mean the same thing as the other uneasinesses. If the country was to be used as a whole, Parliament must be used as a whole ; and this implied abandoning the practice of one party in office and the other party criticising from outside. That was a division as useless for our present

need as the division which we were urgent to obliterate between part of the nation under orders in a war and the rest not under orders. The nation, to work wholeheartedly as one, must be under a Government which politically represented everybody. "Mobilise the nation" meant "mobilise the Government" too.

The latter was easier to effect than the former, and before May was out it was accomplished. A Coalition Government was formed, members of the existing Government standing down for various reasons—some from the simple motive of helping Mr Asquith by placing their offices at his disposal, some with an added reason, such as Lord Haldane's feeling that the attacks on him, grossly ignorant as they were, weakened a Government, or Mr Churchill's acquiescence in a change at the Admiralty without which Unionists would not have joined. When the new Government was announced it was found to include Mr Bonar Law at the Colonial Office, Mr Balfour at the Admiralty, Mr Austen Chamberlain at the India Office, Mr Walter Long at the Local Government Board, Lord Curzon as Lord Privy Seal, and Lord Lansdowne as Minister without Portfolio—this last a novelty in a British Government, conveniently borrowed from foreign practice, but under a title which, also borrowed, was meaningless, the symbol of a British Minister being the Seals of his Office and not a portfolio. Mr Arthur Henderson, taking the Board of Education, brought Labour into the Coalition after some discussion in the party. Sir Edward Carson became Attorney-General; Mr John Redmond, though it was said he had been approached, preferred not to bring in the Nationalist party. The Cabinet now consisted of twelve Liberals, eight Unionists, and one Labour member.

But the vital response to all the agitation lay less in these personal changes than in the first attempt to

bring the business strength of the nation straight into the Government. The rudimentary efforts to organise production of war material through two inevitably jealous committees were abandoned, and the heads of the great engineering firms were gathered in the only sensible way into a Ministry of their own, under Mr Lloyd George as the first Minister of Munitions. His appointment was not the least part of the general satisfaction to a public which knew well his energy and "drive," but was not to know till much later what personal manœuvrings for the new Ministry had been helping to befog the shell controversy. People who had most bitterly resented the expressions of his energy in recent years were willing enough now to believe that it could only do good, especially as his power of those years with big working-class audiences might be expected at a crisis to oil the wheels and superheat the steam of the great industrial machine. There was, however, a distinct suggestion that more than a change of Government might be required in the comment of *The Times* on the Coalition as "the last effort we can make under our accustomed conditions of public life."



## CHAPTER VI

### THE WAR YEARS : PART II

SO ended the first chapter of the war. With all that we now knew about ourselves, with all that these months had taught us of war waged with all the resources of highly developed modern nations, we must make a fresh start. What had come to a head with the change of Government was not merely our particular national sense of rising too sluggishly to the crisis ; it was also the sense that for everyone concerned preconceptions of what the war would be had been falsified. There was, indeed, the belief that the Germans had foreseen its character more clearly than the rest of Europe ; that was part, a large part, of the charge against them now. Every new efficiency of theirs in these conditions was taken as fastening more firmly upon them the guilt of the war ; for it was one more proof of how long and how knowingly they had planned it. But even their purposes had gone astray. The rush of their attack on the West had not succeeded. They were in for a new kind of war as deeply as the Allies ; and the only fear was lest we should not be able to devise the means for meeting critical phases of it in time to catch up with their long start in preparations.

At least we had our chance now, if we made ourselves understand fully what was before us. This was not to be, like all wars hitherto, a clash of armies advancing, retreating, manœuvring, till brought at last by mixed accident and design into some decisive confrontation. It was to be a war of armies more or less immobile

testing one another's strength here and there, piling up resources, until after long desultory sparring the opening for an effort at decision with an overwhelming flinging in of force should be found.

So the war maps with the little flags came to hang dusty and neglected ; there was hardly any movement to mark ; the newspaper captions grew shy of the word "advance" and fell to speaking of "biting at the German line." We could but expect at best to hold them pinned until our new measure of the task before us had brought all our resources to bear. The whole attitude to the war news changed. The fears and then the hopes of a great battle in the West, the intense significance which had attached to the fighting on the Marne and the Aisne, and acutely to the battles of Ypres, the confidence in a resistless rolling down of Russia upon Berlin—all this compactness of ideas about the war gave way to the perception of a vast embattled area at any point of which attrition might suddenly begin to tell conclusively. The whole theatre of war had its importance, the Dardanelles campaign with the rest, though there remained the controversy of opinion about either the possibility or the value of any attrition there. The Germans would not make our mistake of distracting their energy. But as we had entered on the campaign, there were arguable sides to it, even for those who did not believe in its wisdom. It would lighten the defence of the Suez Canal ; and by easing the Russian advance into Asia Minor it would save them from having to draw off for that purpose any of their forces on the Eastern Front. So the Gallipoli news took an equal place with the news from France ; "Anzacs"—the name compounded out of the initials of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps—added themselves to war nomenclature ; and the pictures of those stony, barren, sun-stricken hillsides, and of troops in shorts

and khaki shirts crawling among the rocks, grew as familiar to the imagination as the muddy trenches and slithering earthworks and half-drowned men of the war in the West. There was now, too, the Italian campaign to watch. The Germans had clearly left the Russian Front mainly to the Austrians, and already at the cost of some defeats. Cracow had fallen, and so had Przemyśl; much of the fun over that unpronounceable name was due to the inspiring impression that Germany's principal partner was not up to the job. Now, with Italy attacking, she must prove less up to it than ever, and Germany, forced to give more assistance than Mackensen's stiffening attacks in Galicia, must weaken her Western armies. Then, if Great Britain put out her strength, the chance might come.

Thus we began to think of the whole war. And we could at least feel that we were beginning to see England's part in it. We looked no longer to Russia to stagger Germany. France had been at full stretch from the first. The one thing uncalculated yet was British man-power. As for the United States, all that the sinking of the *Lusitania* had produced was a succession of diplomatic Notes in which American feeling was going to waste like a river in sand; and the best thing to do was to make up our minds that America would be more useful as a source of money and munitions than as a combatant. There again it was Great Britain that could do most, not only as financially the most stable, but as holding the sea communications. In yet another way we took up the war; we, in place of France, had become to Germans the hated enemy. So sure had they been that, distracted by the Irish situation, and selfishly absorbed in our world-wide possessions, we should be blind to the danger to ourselves of their crushing attack on France, that our entry into the war had driven them to the pitch of fury. Not content with the "Hymn of

Hate," they were using as a sort of incantation, scattered through their newspapers, appended irrelevantly to all sorts of documents, tagged on to their letters to one another, the appeal "Gott strafe England." The first big Zeppelin attack on London, dropping ninety bombs there on 31st May, though only four deaths were reported, set a kind of seal on the new spirit. Hostilities in this war were not an army business; they overhung all of us.

How best we might all include ourselves in them remained to be worked out; but the strongest note in the fresh start was that this must be the main concern of the Coalition Government. For its very existence was due to the cry of the nation to be organised. In some ways the absence of official organisation actually helped us. People fell so eagerly upon every chance of doing something that private enterprise was alert to find opportunities, and we thus developed some voluntary services of help and comfort to the armies and the munition workers, which were either non-existent or far less effective in the countries more under Government organisation at the beginning, and therefore less fertile in individual undertakings. Thus accounts which came home of the conditions in the Prisoner of War Camps in Germany led to the setting up of a system for supplying them regularly with parcels of food and all the minor necessities of life. The discovery in the early months of 1915 that men coming home on leave were apt to be landed in London at inhospitable times of night, and forced to spend cold and hungry hours on platform seats, called into being a canteen service at the railway stations to provide them with shelter and hot food. The Y.M.C.A. huts were warm crowded club-rooms of the training camps, and before the next winter had begun to establish themselves near the forward areas in France. All of these activities, with the others that have

been mentioned, grew into big auxiliaries and became in varying degrees official ; there were enough of them to make a joke of the number of badges of various organisations that people could put on.

But our deep-rooted habit of voluntary service, if it gave us some advantages, had the drawback of making mobilisation of the nation a long and tentative process. Account had to be taken of so much that people were already doing. Not for a twelvemonth yet did we come to compulsory military service, and then only by way of two preliminary stages of continued trial of "voluntaryism." The first, which was all that the new Government actually entered upon now, was a National Registration ; Mr Walter Long introduced at the end of June a Bill to compel every individual to state his or her age and occupation, and to state, further, whether the occupation was "serving war purposes." This was a necessary framework for any further action ; it left rival opinions of what that further action should be. The information to be compiled from the registration returns might do its own work in stimulating recruiting ; it might be used as a handle for much sharper individual pressures upon youngish men to enlist ; it might be the basis for conscription. At any rate, it was a piece of organisation. A more immediately active piece was the Ministry of Munitions Bill, which, co-ordinating various powers of control under existing Orders in Council, provided at last a single centralised, and yet elastic, direction of the production of war supplies, laid down special regulations for labour in controlled establishments, and special machinery for dealing with disputes, and aimed at removing a main source of disputes by limiting the profits of all controlled firms to an increase of one-fifth upon the average of the last two years before the war. Yet another measure, the War Pensions Bill, marked our fresh start upon this strange new kind

of war. Hitherto no one had thought of those left behind by the army except in terms of the wives and children of the married men. For them a system of separation allowances, made up of a small deduction from the soldiers' pay and a larger grant from public funds, had been working from an early period in the war. But the urgent need for men had drawn into the army hundreds upon hundreds of thousands who, though unmarried, had had others dependent on them—sons contributing to the household expenses, single men supporting relatives or in other ways keeping some family going. The distress of their withdrawal from wage-earning had been becoming serious. Now the fact was faced that "dependents" must be extended in meaning; we must not be grudging, and above all we must not leave anxieties to hamper enlistment. The Bill was delayed by the more pressing haste for the Registration and Munition Bills, and was not passed till late in the year. The organisations which had been stemming the distress—the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association and the Patriotic Fund Corporation—had to carry on through the summer distributing what they could through their local representatives. So for some months yet the familiar name of "ring-papers," given to the cards on which separation allowances were drawn, retained its meaning in the minds of the soldiers' wives. They had been called "ring-papers" because of the rings printed on them as in savings-bank books, to take the post-marks recording each payment; but most of the women associated the name with their wedding-rings.

Meanwhile the second War Loan was being raised. The Government had asked for no specific sum, but were appealing to the country to subscribe all that it could; and in order to give every class its opportunity small subscriptions could be made through the Post Office. The result was interesting. The Bank of England

received subscriptions to the amount of £570,000,000, the Post Office, £15,000,000; but the numbers of subscribers by the two methods was almost equal—550,000 through the Bank, and 541,000 through the Post Office.

Yet the tone of this summer is not to be recovered from these efforts to begin a new chapter. There was no spark of encouragement in it. Instead, we had to learn that not all the talk and the warnings of Germany's preparedness for her day of battle had given us any measure of reality. The rest of 1915 seemed to be one long revelation of the strength and resources of the enemy; and for the first time people began to understand something of the meaning of Lord Kitchener's estimate of the duration of the war. We had to learn how crushingly Germany could fight on one front without losing an atom of her hold on the other. All through the summer and early autumn months—the only possible season for mobile warfare there—the war news was chiefly of the steady defeat of Russia, the hard-fought defence and the fall of Warsaw, a rally at Kovno, the fall of Kovno, the anxiety about Brest-Litovsk with its immense military stores, its capture, and then the invasion of the soil of Russia, the fall of Grodno and of Vilna, the cutting of railway lines, until at last it was the actual defence of Petrograd that was in question. Hindenburg in the north, Mackensen in the centre, had conclusively made nonsense of "the Russian steam-roller." And at an early stage the Russian retreat was being used to drive home afresh the lesson of Neuve Chapelle; they were being beaten by guns and munitions, they had failed for lack of them; so that there was yet another call for our utmost effort to supply them as well as ourselves. Their lack of equipment grew, in fact, into fantastic stories of troops being sent into the trenches armed with no more than cudgels. As for the Dardanelles campaign, the public was slowly

coming to see that it was not, after all, to be so different from the Flanders Front; it too was being paralysed into trench warfare. From time to time news of an attack on some commanding height like Sari Bair or Achi Baba, or of the fresh landing at Suvla Bay, with its illusion of taking the Turks in flank, raised hopes of decisive action; always the old conditions returned.

So what sense of "lift" there might have been in the feeling of being taken in hand by the new Government faded swiftly away. The nation was in a queer puzzled state, for with all the quickened consciousness of war it somehow found its old habits very persistent. The newspapers had hardly anything to say except about the war; and yet a murder case, in which on no less than three occasions women who had married the man charged had been found drowned in their baths soon afterwards, could be followed with much of the old excitement about such things. War was in everyone's talk, yet people could meet without its being their own only thought, and indeed those who could talk of nothing else seemed to be either bores or tiresomely self-important. Carefulness was more or less in everyone's mind, yet in fact there was very little difference in the way we lived. There was not much "ostentatious retrenchment" to rebuke. Even Paris, so much more stricken by the war than we had been at first, was thinking about fashions again, though of a war kind; it was no wonder that in England women were spending again on dress, and finding that the new shortened skirts, very full and wide, could be as extravagant as the old long swathed fashions. Compunctions on this score could always be met with the plea that we must help France commercially as well as in other ways, and that meant spending on dress. In so many directions we had recovered from the first violent absorption in the war, to find that life outside this absorption, as we dropped



back upon it to carry us through a longer struggle, had not yet cut for itself new enough channels. In very many of us this induced, no doubt, a growing forgetfulness; even to the quiet-minded it was uncomfortable, disturbing; vexed reminders that there was a war on had little reason to cease. The timidity of the Registration Act was more and more criticised; and as soon as the "pink forms" containing the personal information were available they were used for recruiting pressures often indefensible; to masses of the more ignorant men they were employed practically as a compulsion to enlist. The Munitions Act had sounded well, but industry was still disturbed. This time it was the South Wales coal-field which was the scene of strikes, again on the question of the war profits of the masters; and though the strike lasted only for a week or two of July, the settlement was due, not to the new machinery of the Act—which had been put into operation and simply defied—but to Mr Lloyd George's personal influence. And when he made a statement, on the adjournment motion a little later concerning the production of munitions, there was far too much hint of difficulties yet ahead for his words to be quite reassuring. He might indeed say that, with the co-ordination of private firms practically complete, and with eighteen large new Government factories being set up, we could hope "in a few weeks" to be able to supply all that was needed for victory. But one vital question remained unsettled—the consent of the trade unions to the wholesale introduction of unskilled labour. Women were urgently pressing for this work; Mrs Pankhurst and others had been to see the munitions factories in France, and had come home full of the magnificent work that women were doing there. In England they were enrolling by thousands in munition bureaux; but until the problem of "dilution" was out of the way comparatively few

of them could get to work in the volunteer service which was allowed to keep the factories running over Sunday.

For a day or two at the end of September the rather dreary news from other fronts was lost in the excitement of a successful attack in the West. The newspapers burst out into striking headlines and double-leaded columns describing a joint advance by the British at Lens and the French on their right at Souchez. We had captured Hulluch, Loos and Hill 70; on a five-mile front ground had been gained to a depth of well over two miles; and, above all, the success had been largely due to very heavy artillery preparation. We had learned that lesson, then, and we had the resources for modern war now. Moreover, it was to a great extent a victory of the new armies. There had been some criticism of Lord Kitchener for keeping those armies in England so long; his genius for patient work seemed to be over-reaching itself. Surely with all the winter's training they could have been at the Front long ago, and might, the armchair critics thought, have struck perhaps a fatal blow while the Germans were putting out so much of their strength against Russia; a few hundred thousand fresh men in the Western trenches then might have been just the unexpected stroke. It was something that they were in the fight at last; but it was late in the year, and these particular grumbles continued, especially as once more the advance settled down into the same siege warfare a little farther on.

However, the war news soon went back to the East, with a development startling in its rapidity. In October Bulgaria came in on the German side, the Austrians, relieved of the Russian pressure, attacked Belgrade, the redoubtable Mackensen came on to the scene, and by mid-October Germans, Austrians and Bulgarians were sweeping clean over Serbia. Volunteer ambulance

units were rushed out from England to help the wounded and the swarming refugees; a British and French force was hastily landed at Salonica. This piece of the war always remained vague and rather unreal to the people at home. There were some immediate reasons for this. One was that, just at the moment when the full force of the attack developed, the public mind was burning with another burst of passion against Germany. On 16th October there had appeared in the papers a paragraph to the effect that an Englishwoman, Miss Edith Cavell, a nurse who had for some years been living and working in Brussels, had been shot on a charge of assisting war prisoners to escape. The shock was intense and genuine. However unreasonable it may have been to suppose that women who did perilous things in war time could expect different treatment from men, however little Miss Cavell herself had tried to claim any such difference, there was to the ordinary mind something dreadful in the cold-blooded execution of a woman, and not for spying—that, though still dreadful, might be war—but for the very natural impulse of help to her countrymen. Even when it became known that it was not a matter of occasional help but of an elaborate machinery of escape, the punishment still seemed brutal for the offence. As the later accounts revealed the strenuous and frankly horrified efforts of the American Minister in Brussels to obtain reconsideration of the sentence, the British pain and anger felt itself wholly justified. Miss Cavell's death burned deeply into the mind; it fanned to heat again blind and bitter hatred; through all the war it never lost its poignancy; and it remains a martyrdom, for her own nobility in meeting her fate made it that.

The other pressing concern which made the Serbian happening rather remote was that we had entered upon one more of the tentative stages of national service.

On 6th October a new post had come into being, that of Director of Recruiting; Lord Derby had been appointed to it, and within a few days the "Derby scheme" was announced. So we had come to some kind of climax of the long cry for organising the nation; what kind of a climax it was depended upon differing opinions. But at least it was organisation of what had been confused before. Instead of the old indiscriminate recruiting, men between 18 and 41 were to be asked to enrol in groups by age, an unmarried and a married group for each year, twenty-three groups of either kind. And instead of the indiscriminate enlisting pressure which had been the first use made of the "pink forms" there was to be discrimination of the work on which men were engaged, with "starred" and "unstarred" occupations, under the supervision of local committees; so that enrolling in the groups would give the material for a sifting of man-power. The groups would be called up as required, unmarried men first. It was the final phase of the conscription controversy. Those who believed entirely in voluntary effort could maintain that here, for Great Britain at least, was the natural and proper sequel to the Registration Act; it was volunteering organised and channelled. Those who believed in compulsory service acquiesced in the scheme, for it was voluntaryism's last chance. Lord Derby had said, and the Prime Minister had agreed, that if this did not succeed, conscription must ensue. It was to have until the end of the year to prove itself; and Lord Derby undertook, if the figures then were unsatisfactory, to inform the public without delay. Controversy sat back, as it were, to await results, and we watched yet another war emblem appear on the scene, the khaki armlet with the red crown on it, which showed that a man had enrolled in his group.

Even if the public mind had had less to occupy it,

the swiftness of events in Serbia would have prevented their making a real and deep impression. The Allied forces had been too late. Within a few weeks Serbia was wiped out more completely even than Belgium. Nor had we masses of refugees to make the ruthless story vivid; a few came as far as England, but the majority found shelter nearer at hand, as in Corsica. A general sense of horror and suffering in the headlong rout of a whole nation; a few days when names like Nish and Monastir and Lake Doiran were added to our war vocabulary—to most people the fate of Serbia was little more than this. Yet, as the first bewildering unexpectedness of it passed away, and newspapers could take up the discussions in Parliament about the incursion of Bulgaria, a shadow fell, as in the case of Lord Kitchener and the shells, upon another great reputation of the early days of the war, that of Sir Edward Grey. Where had our policy so failed as to throw away the influence which Great Britain, with all that she had done for the Balkan nations, ought to have been able to count upon with them, and how was it that Germany was being allowed to get hold of them? All the Dardanelles controversy revived with this, and with the futility of the deadlock there through all these months wasting men and strength. Not till after-years was the story generally known of the long struggles in the Cabinet and the full scope, crippled in action by one obstacle after another, of Mr Churchill's plans, his conviction of the immense value of a stroke that should hold steady the waverings of Bulgaria and Greece, the difficulties of Sir Edward Grey with Russia obstinately suspicious of Greek ambitions, the whole succession of accidents which so fatally co-operated with the hesitations or opposition of Mr Churchill's colleagues to rob the Dardanelles enterprise of its meaning and its force. All that the impression at the time amounted to was a

sense that everything in that quarter had been lamentably muddled; that we were trying now with the landing at Salonica to frighten the treacherous "King Tino" from putting Greece also into the pocket of his relative, the Kaiser; and that, as M. Venizelos—of whose patriotic character the British public was perhaps a little too sentimentally sure—had resigned, we were probably too late again.

The public mind turned to a new cry. It had called for organisation; it had called for a Coalition and a business Government; what it must have now was leadership. All the failure to lay hold of the nation firmly, all the friction between War Office and civilian Ministers, Sea Lords and civilian Ministers, all the terrible frittering of plans and counter-plans, came simply to lack of leadership. Too many people were at the job; the Prime Minister must appoint a small War Cabinet of three or five, and they must rule. The demand was more right than most of the public knew; for, whereas in the first months practical decisions had in fact been taken in such a kind of inner Cabinet, the making of the Coalition had brought in so many men too important to be left unconsulted that effective decision was now a matter of debate among a dozen people, with the inevitably disunited habits of long party opposition which had for some years been violent. Even without knowledge of these considerations the public could take up easily enough the cry that only a small compact council of supreme decision could possibly be the right way to win a war. By the beginning of November the Prime Minister had announced the creation of "a strategic Cabinet" of five persons—himself, Mr Balfour, Mr Lloyd George, Mr Bonar Law and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr McKenna.

Not Lord Kitchener. But gossip about him had broken out a few days earlier, for it had been observed that he

was not in attendance at the War Office, and rumours of Cabinet dissension were only too ready. They landed an evening paper, *The Globe*, in the distinction of being the first newspaper to fall under the drastic powers of the Defence of the Realm Act; it was suspended, and not allowed to resume publication till a fortnight later; even in the stress of war time there was something startling to Englishmen in the suppression of a newspaper—it had always been one of those things that happen abroad. When the truth was known that Lord Kitchener had gone to review the situation in the Near East, it only provoked rumour in fresh directions. For the growing futility of the situation in Gallipoli, especially after the Serbian defeat had saddled us with new responsibilities, was on everybody's mind; a change of command there, Sir Ian Hamilton being replaced by Sir Charles Monro, added to the gossip. That looked like a new move; but was any new move possible except withdrawal? And was that possible? Putting aside all questions of prestige, could such a movement conceivably be carried out without the most appalling loss of life? And yet would Kitchener be going except for some very serious purpose?

Though the Press Bureau might lay a heavy hand on what was published of the other kind of rumours, it could not stop talk. The Cabinet was believed to be working very unhappily, and it was not difficult to find a reason. The Derby scheme was no longer soothing minds; it was disturbing them. Already it was known that the unmarried groups were not filling as they should; there was far too much "starring." The conscriptionists were growing confident, the Cabinet more worried. In the country at large the uncomfortable thing was that the pledge given to married men that they should not be called till after all the unmarried groups was being mistrusted now. It had brought the

married men in handsomely enough to fill their groups; they were beginning to think they had been too hasty, for if the unmarried groups proved a failure, they would be called immediately.

Thus the second winter of the war threatened to be little less uneasy and restless than the first. Our fresh start had not taken us far. Germany had been able to strike twice heavily in the East, yet, as the check again after the Lens advance showed, could do it without dangerously weakening her line in the West. *Punch* might depict the Kaiser on a rocking-horse with its two ends labelled "East" and "West"; but the sting was that the rocking-horse seemed a very safe mount. Ought it, people began to ask, to be so safe? The incurable suspicion that our energies were only half-awake turned where it had not turned yet—to the command abroad. For the troops admiration and pride remained undiminished, increased even, as we read of all their ingenious inventiveness in making this new war—the impromptu hand-grenades and shaky trench-mortars, and all the craft of sniping and raids. But some plain things had been said publicly about General Headquarters, about an easiness of life there with constant visitors and ladies among them, and soldier-clerks dropping into their duties about 10.30 A.M. Was it partly easy-going in our higher command which was making the German effort on two fronts so possible to maintain? Early in December Sir John French handed over the command in France to Sir Douglas Haig, and took up the command-in-chief of the troops at home.

These, too, had lost a little of their early glamour, as the numbers had increased and been swollen by Canadian and Australian contingents under training. Inevitable problems arose with such concentrations of men away from their homes, and in the romance of khaki. It was in the spring and summer of 1915 that



people first began to be disturbed about the moral dangers of the training camps, and to discuss the "war babies." A private but influential committee reported in June that there was no foundation for exaggerated rumours of the numbers of such babies. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the matter was the good sense and the lack of old rigid moralisings which led people to concern themselves more with the problem of the support and care of unmarried mothers and the babies than with the shortcomings of the probable fathers. Earlier generations would not have faced so frankly and reasonably the consequences of throwing together, in an atmosphere of some excitement, crowds of men and the girls of small towns and villages near the camps. The agitation about drinking also had naturally attached itself to the mass of recruits as well as to munition workers. In London special regulations were made restricting drinking facilities near the big railway stations; and it was partly for military reasons, besides the reasons of general national efficiency and saving money, that the "no treating" order was issued under the Defence of the Realm Act in November; no drink was to be served to any customer not paying for it. Stringent Army Orders were issued about the frequenting of night-clubs by officers in uniform, and there were a few courts martial.

To this second uneasy winter a piece of news just before Christmas Day brought an immense relief, though with melancholy associations. On 21st December it was announced that the whole of the Dardanelles force had been successfully withdrawn in the night of 18th-19th December without the loss of a single life. It was almost beyond belief, and the full accounts, when they came through, made a most exciting story; the stealing out from the trenches, leaving clock-work and time-fuse arrangements which would go on firing rifles and hurling

bombs to give an impression that the trenches were occupied, the smooth embarkation, and the wild scene when at the last moment huge piles of abandoned stores were fired, and the towering blaze along the beaches woke the Turks at last to a bewildered shelling. A burden was off the nation's shoulders, and a weight off its mind ; and the public generally had not the depression of knowing then how, dogged by mishap and disagreement to the very end, the expedition had been robbed of a final effort by the navy, or how near, with the weary exhaustion of the Turks, it was at that very moment of withdrawal to the success which would have justified it. That the enterprise was over, and without a parting massacre to match the slaughter of the landing, was all that people any longer cared about.

More and more, as time passed, a kind of romance, that no other field of battle had, came to hang around Gallipoli. There had been a flash of it at the very beginning, when Rupert Brooke, the radiant young poet, had died on Lemnos. Sir Ian Hamilton, cultured man of letters as well as soldier, had the story of his force told in messages home by Mr Compton Mackenzie, the novelist ; and afterwards Mr John Masefield was to make a prose epic of it. But the expedition had subtler literary flavours. It was fighting hard by the plain of Troy ; it used the Isles of the Ægean to supplement its supplies and camp its drafts ; and the result was that scholars of world-wide fame, the peaceful investigators of long-dead civilisations, were there, unfamiliar figures in their uniforms, attached to this or that fighting force, seconded to mysterious services, turning despised Classical studies to the most useful tricks of modern war, and finding in themselves all kinds of remarkable capacities, from piracy in motor-launches to observing from aeroplanes. And it was just like them that Oxford and Cambridge Common Rooms heard after a time a

little, the public nothing at all, of all their surprising achievements.

But these were only the most picturesque of a great company of men who turned from their books to strange new occupations. The war seemed to be calling perpetually for more knowledge of a thousand things—of peoples all over the world, of climates and industries, of products and raw materials. Either because they had, in some of their peaceful habits, learned of these things, or because they had the minds that could find out about them, dons and researchers were at work in the oddest ways for the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, or the War Office.

Another withdrawal at this time was that of the Indian troops from France. People had liked in the early months of the war to think that men of whose age-long warrior traditions they had read so much, the men whom Kipling had made familiar, had brought over to our need their fighting qualities. Many of them we had seen, for they had their own hospital at Brighton, giving to George IV.'s Pavilion, perhaps for the first time, a population not out of accord with its domes and fantasies. As time went on there had been rumours that in the European climate, and the strange conditions of the new and so largely mechanical warfare, the Indians were rather cruelly out of their element; and there was no surprise when they were sent home. Their return might also liberate for active service territorial units which, at the beginning of the war, had been sent to garrison India.

This Christmas of 1915 remains in the mind as the great parcel-sending time. For by now, after another twelve months' recruiting, the army was in millions, and there was no house in the country that had not some relative or friend to remember. In most places the parcel-sending was organised to some extent by an

informal committee, for the sake of seeing that the parcels of poor people and country folk, ill-accustomed to such tasks, were made up securely and properly addressed. In most places, too, money had been collected to send a parcel to every man of the place who was serving, so that no one should be so poor or friendless as not to have his token of remembrance; and the committees were all busy assembling in little piles a plum-pudding, chocolate, cigarettes and so on for each man, and sewing each pile up into a neat canvas package. There was never quite such a distribution again, for one thing, because by the time the next Christmas came round men in the army were rather better off for food and tobacco than the people at home.

The time had now come for the Derby scheme to publish its results and show us whether or no we must take the final step of compulsion. Just before 12th December, the last day of voluntary group enlistment, there was a heavy rush of unmarried men who had been hanging back; it remained to be seen whether that had saved the scheme. But of this there was little expectation. Before the end of the year it was being said that enough was known of the Derby figures to make compulsion certain; and it was noticed that Sir John Simon, the only convinced opponent of conscription in the Cabinet, was not attending Cabinet meetings. He resigned on 4th January, and on the 5th the figures were published. They were complicated, but what emerged from them was that, when all possible allowances had been made for "starred" men, and men who were medically unfit, there were over 650,000 single men who had simply evaded enrolment. This, after all that had been said, could only mean one course of action. And indeed from many angles opinion was coming round to compulsion. One strong argument, for instance, could be derived from the growing burden of separation

allowances. The war was costing by now about £5,000,000 a day. It was absurd to be enlisting married men and paying the heavy separation allowances for wives and families while there were hundreds of thousands of young men, the vast majority of whom would have either no dependents to claim allowances, or dependents entitled to far less of an allowance than a wife and family. But the argument which was gaining more and more hold was that nothing but compulsory service could possibly be fair all round. Besides the general unfairness of leaving national service to individual decision and individual pressures, specific unfairnesses were increasingly apparent. It had been seen how unfairly a voluntary group-system might work for the married men. There was too the unfairness of patching up wounded and sick men and returning them to the front while hundreds of thousands were avoiding going out at all. There was the unfairness of leaving the employer who had let his men go to carry on with substitutes in face of competitors who would give up no men until they were compelled. And to compulsion the Government came.

“The turning point of the war,” said the newspapers. Perhaps ; but not for some months even yet did we round it completely. All along, one main motive for reluctance had been the fear of a deep division of the nation ; Mr Bonar Law had been expressing this only a month or two earlier. And the attitude of Labour was a grave difficulty in the way. Wage-earners had the strongest suspicion that conscription for active service would soon mean conscription for all the industrial service at home, and this they would not have. It would be folly to antagonise them, and their disaffections were known to be far from appeased. Indeed rumour, obscure because of the muzzling of the newspapers, was hinting at disaffection worse than any yet, in that it was openly

revolutionary. The greatest care was taken to keep secret the fact that Mr Lloyd George's famous wizardry, sent to charm the Clyde in December, had proved a shocking failure ; but the facts came out in the Commons early in January 1916, when questions were asked concerning the suppression of *Forward*—an advanced Labour paper which had published accounts of his abortive efforts—and drew from him statements that “ a powerful organisation ” was at work which made conciliatory approaches quite useless. There were, of course, many who saw in all this only a reason the more for conscription. To the Government, however, it could only be a reason for caution ; and the famous decision for compulsion turned out, when the Bill was introduced on 5th January, to be no more than a compulsory supplement to the Derby scheme. Unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 41 who had not attested were to be treated as attested ; otherwise the enrolled groups remained the basis of recruiting.

This was immediately seen as only one more deplorable half-measure. But for a while two other subjects caught the watchful minds of the people who were always screwing the nation up to the mark. One was the strenuous appeal for war savings. The second War Budget had estimated for an expenditure of £1,590,000,000, and that meant asking for every possible penny. To catch all small savings War Savings Certificates were now invented, and issued at post offices at the price of 15s. 6d., to become of the value of £1 in seven years' time. A War Savings Committee was added to the many other committees ; and to its propaganda about cheap and nourishing breakfasts, food-values of the simple dinner, avoidance of unnecessary travelling, and so on, the zealous people added their own activities in denouncing the fashions, in indignation about the elaborate menus at the big hotels, about

motoring to race-meetings, about the long lines of cars and taxis ironically parked outside a Guildhall meeting to preach economy.

This was the period at which Zeppelin raids took on the aspect of a systematic bombing campaign. In the early months of 1916 they were coming frequently and in fleets, and were penetrating much farther inland, reaching some Midland counties. Ever since a big raid on London, in October 1915, when over forty people had been killed, there had been complaint of the apparent helplessness of the authorities. Now the complaint rose loudly. Sir Percy Scott had been appointed to command the air defence of London; but the glamour which hung about the hero of the naval guns at Ladysmith in 1899, and all his reputation in warship gunnery since then, could not conjure up out of nothing men, material, and staff work for the job. This year was to see far more extensive air-raiding; but there had been enough of it already to work up a storm of popular impatience during February at the immunity of the raiders. As a by-election happened to occur just then in East Hertfordshire—which was on the line of airships making for London over the East Anglian coast—Mr Pemberton Billing, standing as an Independent candidate on the outcry of the moment, was swept into Parliament early in March as the first “member for better air defence.” He found an ally in Mr Joynson Hicks, who was making his first reputation in the House by taking up this subject. It widened out into a vigorous agitation for fresh methods over the whole of our air service. Aeroplanes were taking a part in the war far greater than the observation duty which was all that they had been expected to perform; they were going to be a fighting force, and as such must have an organisation which would give the service perfectly free development. To the attack on the immediate question of air defence the

Government had but a feeble reply to make. The Prime Minister rather unfortunately suggested that the best defeat of Zeppelin raids would be "darkness and composure." Courage enough there was; composure was a thing the Government hardly had the right to ask for until they induced confidence. Darkness we had already in London, the early lighting restrictions had been much stiffened, and before long the streets were entirely unlighted; most other large towns were now kept as dark as the East Coast towns had been from the beginning. Shops had to indicate by some transparency device in their blinds (which survived here and there long after the war) whether they were open or closed; special constables acquired a new duty in watching for careless streaks of lights from house windows on their rounds; and town dwellers generally discovered with some surprise, to the amusement of country people, that a moonless night can be so dark that no one can see his way about. Incidentally a few of them were much uplifted by finding that there are far more stars in the sky than they had ever supposed.

In the middle of February the war in the West caught all minds again. A heavy German attack was launched at Verdun. From the outset, long before anyone could foresee the tremendous saga that it was to become, it was anxiously watched. It seemed to have an instant significance: once again, was this the great battle of the war? The drastic German dealing with the Eastern Front in 1915 would of course be followed by some terrific turning upon the Allies in the West; and here it was. Then, as it became known that this was "the Crown Prince's battle," and that the Kaiser was there, and the *communiqués* told of the masses and masses of troops thrown into the assaults, it looked indeed like the bid for victory. As the days passed, and the attack was seen to be no mere winning of trenches and consolidating



a new piece of ground, that impression increased. Into the long war of position had come after all a pitched battle of something like the old kind, though heightened with all the immensity of modern warfare; it was a deliberate and gigantic trial of strength, and such a thing might well be conclusive. Eagerly, but very anxiously, the British people heard the echoes of the heroic French cry, "*Ils ne passeront pas*," and watched the awful fury of the fight for Fort Douaumont.

Just as the fight began there died one who had known well and loved both England and France, and had made of his knowledge something new in literature—Henry James. Even the preoccupation with the war did not rob him of his tributes, for he had identified himself with the war in a gesture of sympathy that had been deeply valued; he had abandoned his American citizenship, and been naturalised as an Englishman, because at such a time he would not be in any respect less English than those among whom he had passed nearly all his life. In the New Year Honours list of this very year he had received the Order of Merit; and it was sad that he did not live longer to enjoy it. But he had at any rate lived to enjoy in his later years the kind of reputation that meant most to him, and some recognition of what the modern novel owes to his conception of his art—a recognition which had led him to expound that conception in a series of prefaces to his books, fascinating to other writers. The modern artistic method of "the stream of consciousness," though the phrase was not then current, and though he fastened upon consciousness in a narrower way than the moderns, is in fact a method which derives largely, if not principally, from his view of the novel as a presentation of life by intense imaginative concentration upon the minds of the characters; and he had suffered the fate of all pioneers of an art in being regarded at one time as "too difficult."

It was not long before we had an anxiety of our own to divide the war news with Verdun. Little notice had so far been taken of an expedition up the Tigris, composed of troops from India, which was designed to be another distraction of the Turkish forces from Egypt and from the Russians in Asia Minor. The latter object certainly seemed to be achieved; February brought news of the fall of Erzerum and hopes of a Turkish collapse. But the Tigris expedition had gone wrong. General Townshend was besieged in Kut-el-Amara, and a relieving force was being held up, now by floods, now by persistent fighting; till Mesopotamia, with alternations between "nearly there" and "another check," came only too near our familiarity with the endless alternations of the Western Front. Endless—but it was difficult to believe that such a fight as that at Verdun in its immense persistence could fail to bring the smash. Week after week it went on, dying down now for a day or two and blazing up again into some new frightful passage of attack and defence, unlike anything hitherto in the war. Fort Douaumont, the fort and village of Vaux, the Bois des Corbeaux, the Mort Homme, Malancourt—place after place in the circle of defences rang with a blood-stained glory in the *communiqués*, till it seemed as if not even the Germans could stand this drain of men. Nor, for all the bitter suggestions to that effect, would they be suffering it for nothing more than the Crown Prince's conceited obstinacy. They must surely be meaning to make it the final effort for which no cost could be too high. And if so, with the French holding on magnificently, the enemy might crack. Yet the incessant trench-fighting on our front showed no weakness in them; and the best that we could do to help at the moment was to take over from the French more of the line, and use our slowly increasing numbers in that way.

But was this all we could do, while France was at what might be a death-grip? Could anything, people asked, show more clearly how fatally we had shilly-shallied, to find ourselves now with volunteer recruits not nearly ready, when, if we had faced compulsory service at the beginning, we might have had by this time the sort of army that could have turned the scale for good with the Germans so desperately engaged? The great chance was going by, and we still lost in the wretched half-measures. Recruiting was "a chaos." The unmarried groups had been called up on 10th February; within a month, by two proclamations, on 4th and 11th March, the whole of the married groups were called, and the storm of criticism broke. Had it ever been expected, when the Derby scheme began, that the older married men would be called like this? Nor was there much hesitation in pointing out where the scheme had gone wrong. Tacking it on to "voluntaryism" had made it far too weak all through, and the possible exemptions had been so numerous that the professed compulsion of the unattested unmarried men had turned out almost a dead letter. The whole scheme must go, and straightforward conscription take its place.

We were coming to that late in April, when for a week minds were violently wrested away in a new direction. On 25th April the papers were full of "an armed raid" on Ireland. A German ship carrying munitions had been captured, a convoying submarine had got away, but two men landed from her in a boat had been traced to hiding and arrested. One of them was Sir Roger Casement. It was a wild episode, and yet in a strange way, when it happened, it came as a more than half-expected thing. The ghost of Lazare Hoche hung about it. England at war had always had to fear that her enemy would strike through Ireland. There was bound to be some such desperate enterprise as this, and in its

passionate futility it was a sheer wraith of the old, unhappy, far-off things ; the modern touch of the submarine could not really bring into our own day that vision of the two men landing from a boat on a desolate shore, not finding the friends they had hoped to meet, and walking off alone to set fire to Ireland. The fact that it was Casement who had come over in the submarine shocked many people, for he had been in British Government service as a consul. He had made his reputation first when sent to inquire into statements about abominable labour conditions in the Congo rubber trade, and later into similar statements about the rubber trade on the Putumayo ; it had not occurred to anybody to reflect what gleams of the age-long Irish sense of oppression, working in his mind, may have lain hidden in the words of his reports. There had been rumours about him since the early days of the war, but only now did the general public learn how he had been all the time in Germany, working bitterly against England, and endeavouring with the connivance of the German authorities to persuade Irish soldiers in prison camps to join him on this raid.

And after all only to make this solitary landing. Only ? The next day Dublin was echoing with the crackle of rifles and the slamming thud of field guns, and no one knew what the rebellion might be. For a day or two there was hardly any news. In Dublin the rebels had seized the Post Office and the Four Courts, and there were signs of rising elsewhere. Then on 1st May came the statement that " the back of the rebellion was broken," and the rebels surrendering ; and long accounts of the fighting, the perilous street battles from house to house, windows and roof parapets deadly with snipers, Sackville Street in flames, the Four Courts battered, the Post Office and Liberty Hall, the headquarters of Irish labour republicanism, shelled to pieces.

"A man named Collins" had been prominent in it all; James Connolly, who had been Larkin's colleague in the strike of 1913, was reported killed. By 2nd May it was over; about 1000 of the Irish had surrendered, 489 had been deported for trial, including one Eamonn de Valera, and England was asking angrily how it had all happened. For it had given a very real alarm. On the day the rebellion broke out German ships had again shelled some East Coast towns; and it might well look as if, at the crisis of Verdun, Germany had contrived to stab us in the back. One part of the storm of nerves was soon over. Mr Birrell, the Irish Secretary, could look for no mercy. All the bitter resentment in the years just before the war of the Home Rule measure lived again when he had to face the House on 3rd May with the admission that, though he had known of the new movement in Ireland, Sinn Fein—that we now first heard of—he had entirely miscalculated its purpose and determination; and with the confession that he had utterly failed in his duty. Whatever was felt by those who heard him in the House, who saw his face as he spoke of the three executions of leaders that morning, people in general spared nothing of their scornful anger against a smooth literary amateur who had taken Ireland in war as triflingly as, to their minds, he had taken the struggle over Home Rule, and had bungled her into this useless bloodshed.

He resigned, of course, at once; and his public life was over. But the storm of nerves was not appeased. It was too acute to pause, except with a resentful surprise, at Sir Edward Carson's plea that there should be no taking of vengeance now. Day after day came statements of more executions, but there was, side by side with the alarmed exasperation, a sense of how terribly wrong we must have been going with Ireland, to make such men die in desperation. Just as that was turning

to a sense of how terribly wrong we were going now, with drawn-out executions, the climax of those nerve-ridden days came with the reports of the death of Mr Sheehy Skeffington. No one who knew anything of him could believe for a moment that he had had arms in his hand, yet he had been shot ; and as, piecemeal, came the miserable story of a British officer, judged in the end insane by a court martial, ragingly putting him and others to death in a yard, bitterness against the rebellion felt the chill of some shame, and there were no more executions. That last incident silenced, if it did not convince, those who could not even now believe that there had been too many executions already.

The Dublin rising masked to a great extent the final stage of the question of compulsory service, and took the interest out of one more event of war time strange to English ideas, the first secret session of Parliament. After some days in late April, during which it was pretty well known that the Cabinet was at a crisis, the announcement was made that Parliament would sit in secret to hear the Government's statement, and that powers under the Defence of the Realm Act would be drastically used in the case of any leakage of information. Too much, in fact, had been known in the last few months of Cabinet affairs. Ministers themselves had not been able at such a time to remember strictly their traditions ; Mr Churchill, departing from office to service in France, had, in October 1915 and since, revealed a good deal of his relations with Lord Fisher. Mr Lloyd George had found the success of his capture of a leading rôle in the shell controversy rather clouded by some things Lord Haldane had said about Cabinet negotiations with great engineering firms in the autumn of 1914. Much besides had become known in less public ways. So strong measures were threatened against any printing of information about the secret session other

than what might be officially communicated after it ; and this was not a time at which people would pay much attention to the invasion of privilege implied in a decision by the Executive, not by Parliament itself, as to the publication of proceedings. Lord Salisbury expressed a formal protest in the Lords ; the Commons, in a way that would have distressed a seventeenth-century member, hardly seemed to be aware of the invasion.

The secret session took place on 25th April, and no detail of the Ministerial statement was given. But for events in Ireland the next incident would not have escaped as lightly as it did—the fiasco on 27th April, when the Government's first proposals, outlined on a motion by Mr Long for leave to introduce a Bill, were so promptly pulled to pieces that they never became a Bill at all. The Prime Minister simply withdrew the motion. After all the recent crisis, the proposals were still half-hearted ; they applied compulsion to all youths as they reached the age of 18, but otherwise only concerned the men already enrolled. In the absence of any specific information as to what the Ministry had said to the secret session, no one could imagine on what basis of numbers serving and required it could ever have been supposed that compulsion for the future at the age of 18 would supply enough men. Above all, the proposals did nothing to remedy the irritating tangle of unfairnesses. But before the public mind had grown easy enough about Ireland to round upon Ministers, they faced their fence. On 3rd May, the date of Mr Birrell's statement to the Commons, the Compulsory Service Bill was introduced, applying to all men between the ages of 18 and 41 ; the tribunals in every National Registration area which had been working under the Derby scheme were to continue to consider applications for exemption, whether on the grounds of the nature of

the civilian occupation of the applicant (though these were to be much more strictly considered) or on that of conscientious objection to military service.

After nearly two years we had come to conscription. It had been discussed to weariness, and the old controversies trailed on even now into the question whether such a surrender of principle should have been made when it might well be too late to have any real effect. For however we might have modified our views of the war into methods of attrition, it was always possible that attrition might reveal itself in a sudden cracking somewhere, not necessarily in a slow wearing-down. And there was big fighting enough to make the possibility of a sudden cracking. All this time the terrific concentration of Verdun was continuing with varying fortunes. A violent Austrian attack on the Italians in the Trentino, the first time for nearly a year that that front had come much into the news, was countered by a strong Russian revival on Austria's Eastern Front early in June which brought back, as the Eastern Front always did, old ideas of sweeping movements and vast results; General Brusiloff's armies captured Lutsk and Czernowitz, and were numbering their Austrian prisoners in hundreds of thousands. By the end of the month the attack in the Trentino had died away, and the Italians had on the whole held their ground. The conviction grew that the comparative quietness on the British Front meant *some gathering of our new armies for a blow* which, falling on German armies appallingly strained by their Verdun effort, and weakened badly by the double Austrian collapse, might break them down completely.

Not that this early summer of 1916 had much that was exhilarating for us. On 1st May we learned that Kut-el-Amara had fallen, and General Townshend and his men were prisoners—the relief force had not got



through. Zeppelin raids were almost nightly occurrences, and though one or two failed to get back to their base we seemed to be still very helpless against them. Then a great flaming of headlines on 3rd June startled the whole country. At last the big naval battle had come; instead of the long exasperating vexation of cruisers slipping out to shell coast towns, submarines slipping round to sink ships, the main German fleet had been caught at sea, and tremendous broadsides of those gigantic guns had had their chance. Eagerly people began to read, and gravely they read on; worry had come where we had most hoped for nothing but pride and security. The result had been no smashing glorious blow. After hours of action off Jutland, the German fleet had vanished home in night and fog; and, as far as the Admiralty announcement went, we could not be sure that we had not suffered more than they. We had lost six cruisers and eight destroyers, and knew of the sinking of only one German battle-cruiser, one light cruiser, and an unspecified number of destroyers. Next day certainly brought better news—two German battle-ships as well as two battle-cruisers had been sunk and we had lost no ships of those classes; the respective losses were now put, ours at 14 vessels, the Germans at 18. But German *communiqués* were putting their losses very differently and claiming the engagement as a victory. We, with the best will in the world, were taking it after all our high hopes as little better than virtually a defeat. At the very best, granted it a drawn battle, it was a kind of defeat to have had the German main fleet at sea and not finished the business.

The truth was, perhaps, that we had to learn about the sea what we had already learned about the land—that modern warfare was utterly unexpected and gave us none of the old compact decisive actions. Swift vessels, fighting at immensely long range, could not

hold one another to blows in the old Nelson way ; and across the great distances engagements must always be uncertain and results unsure. But we had not learned this ; and it was not easy to get over the shock of the first Admiralty announcement : it had perhaps better have been less honest. Endless argument arose, hints of some lack of co-ordination between Admiral Jellicoe and Admiral Beatty, in command of the battle-cruisers which had first made contact with the German fleet, talk too of some failure of the Admiralty to keep in wireless touch with the fleets, and, contrarily, of too much Admiralty interference by wireless.

Controversy about the battle in all its aspects, with precisely careful calculation of minutes here and minutes there at which things happened, was to drag on for long ; and indeed, like much else, could not possibly be cleared up until the end of the war should give us facts on the German side. Now discussion was cut across sharply. The afternoon of 6th June struck everyone aghast with the news that Lord Kitchener, starting on a visit to Russia, had been drowned ; the ship in which he had embarked had been sunk off the Orkneys, probably by a mine. In its abrupt suddenness the news was as shocking as anything in the war. The public had not even known of his journey ; and he was dead. Every single fret of strained war minds leapt into life and fastened upon this calamity. The spy scare first ; secret the departure might seem to have been, but was it conceivable that by mere mischance that ship, of all ships, should have been sunk ? Spies must have learned of his departure, and it would be found that it was a submarine, and not a mine, that had blown up the ship. Then bitterness of the meanest kind : the Government had not wanted Kitchener ; they had quarrelled with him, found him too strong ; or else they had come round to the view that he was really standing in the

way of victory now, obstinate, clinging to old ideas because he had no active service in this war and would not learn from those who had ; the Russian visit had been a mere excuse to get rid of him, and he had been exposed to this useless and now fatal risk. Then even a kind of national hallucination, like that over the supposed passage of Russian troops through England ; Kitchener was not dead at all ; it was some elaborate piece of secrecy, misleading the enemy, so as to make sure that he did get to Russia ; all the time he had been taking some other route. There was even a stranger hallucination still, the queer outbreak of a superstition one would have thought extinct for centuries, reviving the Merlin and Arthur legends in a belief that, apparently dead, Kitchener was really awaiting in some magical spot a moment for his return. Amid all these swaying excitements of mind the truth of his achievement, the real value of his work and his personality, had to abide its final estimation ; too much of it was still behind official veils. But from all the wild rumours, even more from the reluctance to believe that he could be dead and England without him, one thing at least emerged—the hold he had upon his countrymen's imagination to the last.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAR YEARS : PART III

WE were moving again into a new chapter of the war. Its opening was not so definitely marked as the opening of the second one had been, both by our fresh envisaging of what the war was to mean, and by the making of the Coalition Government. No particular event dates the third phase. Yet it is very distinct, though at the time we passed into it half unconscious of the transition. Mainly it is marked by a far quieter temper and a real unity of feeling. In the first phase we had been violently roused, but very wrong in our conceptions of what was before us ; in the second, wiser in some ways, we had been energetic, anxious, but still so caught in the tangled cross-currents of our old habits of doing things that the new start was, after all, much farther off than we thought, and we were not even sure that we had made it. Now a kind of quietness of mind which, for all the rending personal apprehensions, all the hard exhausting work, did replace the recriminations and the rasped nerves, showed that the new start had been made for months past, little as we had noticed it. If the mental change is the broad sign of it, the lesser signs are a number of changes which, coming gradually upon us, had in the sum of them made us a nation at war. There was little need in June 1916 for the old fretted cry that most people were living as if there were no war on.

For one thing, those first six months of 1916 saw the great entry of women into the war tasks. Their own

special spheres—nursing, and V.A.D. work of all kinds, and canteen work at stations, at the camps, at munition works—had been growing enormously; but now they were everywhere. They were in every form of business, from the big banks to the tiniest city office; they were in every industry, even as navvies in gas-works; they were ticket collectors and porters, tram and bus conductors, guards on the Underground railways; they had replaced chauffeurs, gardeners, footmen, hunt servants and club servants. By June there were probably 150,000 on munition work, very many of them women who had never done any physical work in their lives, but now endured the full stretch at the lathes and in the filling-shops. The “dilution” difficulty had been largely overcome by a formula of the Prime Minister’s in January; and the only check on a much greater employment of women was the lack as yet of the big new Government factories to put them in. There was, too, a new recruiting of women that was very popular, for it put them into the army. From an early stage of the war there had been suggestions that one most obvious way of using women to liberate men would be to give them that part of the army’s life which in civil life was always regarded as a woman’s job—cooking, catering, and other such services. It was absurd to be keeping men at them, and there was also the argument that women would probably do them much more economically. Experiments in this direction had been made, but only piecemeal, until the beginning of 1916 the Adjutant-General decided upon the formation of the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps. Within a few months the Waacs were 50,000 strong, and became familiar figures in France as well as at home in their short khaki skirts and neat little feminine versions of the military cap. They ranged widely, from the trim smart chauffeuse of a War Office car, or the waitresses of the Officers’

Club at Montreuil dressed in the G.H.Q. colours, to the fatigue-parties of the Base camp cook-houses. All this work of women seemed to come with a rush. It had been long talked of, here and there women tram conductors, ticket collectors and so on had been noticed. Now, no doubt with the calling up of the Derby groups, this change in the aspect of daily life was suddenly unmistakable.

Then again, the whole nation was beginning to be more careful. It had to be, for several reasons. The broad general one was that the Exchequer was not going to let us off with war loans ; it was quite properly determined also to do all that could possibly be done out of income, and the revenue was being screwed up to a point that would a few years earlier have appeared quite fantastic. Mr Gladstone had once in warning depicted what he thought the impossible bogey of a Budget of £200,000,000. Now in 1916 the Chancellor was budgeting for over £500,000,000 ; the graduated income tax (Mr Gladstone thought a sixpenny one matter for apology) ran now from 8s. to 5s., an entertainments tax was imposed, and a tax on matches which led to a boom in mechanical lighters. All this meant a real check in spending, for as yet the new flood of war wealth was spreading but slowly. There were other limitations too. The submarine sinkings of ships were still far from the real menace of twelve months later. But tonnage was urgently needed by the Government for war material, and some of the habitual cargoes of peace days were being ruled out. Wood-pulp was the first, Sweden having put an embargo on its export in January ; and the result was that there must be economy in the use of paper. Shops were no longer generous with paper bags and wrappings, and before long would wrap up nothing at all ; ingenious methods were invented for using envelopes over and over again,

and the true "patriot" acquired another of his eagerly sought distinctions in the unseemly scraps on which he wrote his letters. Restrictions soon followed on imports of timber and of tobacco. By the end of June the growing indignation about careless use of motors—one case was quoted of two people who in 1916 used petrol on a drive of 150 miles to buy a pet dog—was met by a system of control, petrol being obtainable only on permits, though these were for some time too easily granted; it was not difficult to find some small war job for a car that would be good enough excuse for a permit. Besides these first definite restrictions of supplies there was at least a beginning of much other carefulness. Households were having "meatless days," and were glad to have them, for with the heavy demand of the army and of the allied nations, and with higher freights, meat was rising seriously in price. Bread was not sold new, and last crusts not thrown away. We had early been asked to be careful with potatoes. This spring and summer of 1916 saw a great effort at vegetable-growing. Something had been done in the year before; but now the Food Supplies Committee was making a more pressing appeal. In many ways it did good. Thousands of bits of waste land and odd corners were put into cultivation; middle-aged amateurs took over the allotments which wage-earners gone to the war had had to give up; suburban gardens everywhere, which had prided themselves on their roses or their hardy annuals, prided themselves now on carrots and runner-beans. But inevitably there was much waste labour and breaking up of ground really useless. And it was absurd that even in a matter like this there had to be a kind of ostentatious patriotism; people who had plenty of flower beds to convert to vegetable-growing could not be content without the added gesture of digging up a tennis lawn for planting potatoes. It seemed to comfort

them to make it so very plain that they were doing every kind of duty, and preventing lawn tennis as well as increasing food supplies.

But above all, what drew people together now was the growing consciousness that, for all the outcry about the chaos of recruiting, evasions of service and so on, there were vast armies in being which had sprung from every town and every village in the kingdom. There was no place so small that it could not show in some windows the cards, familiar then, with a representation of the Victoria Cross on them, and the name of a man who had gone to serve. Gone, indeed; the men were in France. That change, too, seemed to have come with a rush. In spite of the fact that the autumn battles had been to some extent battles of the new armies, that for months they had been steadily going away, the mass of them had been still at home for the Christmas of 1915. Now, all of a sudden, they were the B.E.F. And this helped towards the quietness of mind in a community of anxiety and pride.

And in the early days of July a fresh hope with the pride. At last the big engagement on the British Front had begun, as the long struggle at Verdun wore itself out; the battle of the Somme was sweeping forward. It stood out most curiously, that battle. One reason was that, much as we had read by this time of the fury of modern shelling, the Somme first made really vivid the vision of square miles of country, mere torn and cratered devastation from which even the kindly soil had vanished; of whole villages which, though they had names in the *communiqués* and were talked of as captured, were nothing but conventional marks of an advance, and in themselves not even stumps of ruined houses, but actually ground down till they were no more than patches of the devastation slightly more hummocky than the rest. Secondly, the battle was a



very real advance; day after day the lines on the war maps in the papers kept altering their curves and putting more of France behind our lines. Rightly or wrongly, there came the heartening impression that munitions were adequate, that staff work, training, preparation, were at last up to the measure of the new gigantic kind of war, control and coherence in an attack achieved, as far as they ever could be achieved, in modern conditions. Again, this, far more than Hulluch and Loos, was to people at home the battle of the new armies; somehow we knew that the men who fought over Guillemont and Thiepval and the rest were the battalions with the familiar double numbering—1st/4th, 2nd/4th—which marked the legions of the civilian soldier. Within a week or two we were knowing it in the one more way that made this battle stand out. No one who lived through that time will ever forget the casualty lists of the Somme. In daily batches of ten thousand they struck at the endless little villas in suburban roads which had, so short a while before, been warm with pride in the trim young officer, or the budding sergeant with his stripes fresh on his sleeve; at the schools which junior masters had so lately been visiting in their new Sam Brown belts; at the universities—terribly heavily there—where name after name in the lists meant that some undergraduate would chatter no more in the college lodge or cross the quad in shorts and sweater, some young don would look no more from his windows upon the gardens; at the country houses which, growing suddenly still and stricken, remembered in their fine tradition the cottages in the village which would have grown still too. From that time the armies were England.

This latter half of 1916 had in it a sincerity of purpose fine enough to take its place beside so much sorrow. If some of the exaltation of early days of the war had

faded, much that was sentimental, and even hysterical, had faded too. And the puzzled mind of 1915 was past ; the old life which seemed to entangle so persistently our wish to live in the war had gone. All habits were upset. Middle-class households woke at unearthly hours to get a daughter off to a factory ; and kept a running meal going in the evening for the return of that daughter and the one working overtime in an office, and a mother sitting in hours at a surgical-dressing depot, and a father going on special-constable duty at midnight. Working-class homes in village and in town made up a dinner now for the wife as well as for the husband to take out to the day's labour. Fashionable women, who had hardly heard of such things, ran their households according to shifts in factories and hours of duty at canteens ; and if some of them laid themselves open to cynical comment by the frequency with which they appeared in the illustrated papers in becoming uniforms that looked like fancy dress, this was not altogether their fault ; the modern Press must have its public characters to exploit. Evenings and nights carried on the business of the day. Long and light now the evenings were ; for with the new sense of its value in war time, especially for the amateur food production that was being so vigorously urged, the Daylight Saving Bill, rather scoffed at in earlier years, had gone through Parliament in May in a single week. People were discovering what Mr Willett, its patient promoter, had so often told them, that the ingenious device of putting clocks forward would perfectly simply work a kind of miracle. Time-tables and meal-hours and all our other fixed points could remain fixed, and yet we should find our days longer, and that by more than one hour in the effect which the change had on the mind. The experiment had its amusing accompaniments in the stories of those who thought it a blasphemous interference with

the divine order of sunrise and sunset. Nor was it of use in all his work to the farmer; dew would not dry off an hour earlier, nor cows change their milking habits. But in the gardens and on the allotments the hour more of daylight made all the difference to work; and it was no small thing either that tired people from heavily working businesses had that much more air and light to enjoy when they came home. As for the working nights, they brought experiences which will never be quite forgotten. Thousands of people made the discovery of the uncanniness of occupations carried on when the life of day and sun has gone out of the world; the shadowiness of figures moving and work going on in the windy black spaces of goods yards and amid the lurid gleams of gas-works, the ghostly hollow sound of dark and empty streets, the queer solitariness which somehow clings to work at night, even when one is not alone.

The quieting sense of unity in being about the nation's business was helped and widened by sense of unity with the armies. Even at the time people were aware, though never quite as fully as they should have been, how remarkably the postal service of the army worked; in retrospect it seems miraculous. Vague as might appear an address to no more precise a place than a certain unit, "B.E.F., France," letters and parcels reached their manifold and wild destinations with extraordinarily little delay, and went up with the rations into the trenches. Soldiers serving abroad had no need to use postage stamps, and the replies came back as quickly, with the triangular stamp of the Field Censor in a corner. The armies were not hopelessly far away. In many ways, now that the early months were over, and experience had shown us more clearly what things we still must be cautious about and what did not matter, people at home, though nothing could ever

convey the realities of the Front, had increasingly a kind of familiarity with it.

The strictness which had kept all accounts of the fighting to the official "Eyewitness" had broken down; and the newspapers had been allowed to send their own correspondents to France. They had not the romantic chances of the old-time war correspondent. They were brigaded, as it were, in a château reserved for them, did their work under supervision, and saw just as much of the Front or its near neighbourhood as the authorities permitted. But at least they could introduce a variety and vividness of their own into the war story; and as time went on they saw more and more of the real thing. Then, again, there were a good many visitors to the battle area now, politicians useful in keeping up war spirit at home, *labour leaders who might influence war industry*, notable personages among the Allies, or even more among neutrals whom we wished to conciliate. Visitors also were brigaded in a château, close to the field of Agincourt, and taken on selected journeys to the Front—sometimes, if malicious rumour were true, to places which were not the Front at all, but only looked like it. Photographs and drawings of the battle area were numerous. A sort of conscientiousness, very odd in some aspects, made the Government feel it a duty to send out distinguished artists, lest posterity might be unaware of the insane nightmare mankind at war can make for itself. Volumes of drawings by Mr Muirhead Bone were published; Sir William Orpen, besides his sketches of the Front, made studies of the innumerable types of the armies. War posters by him, Mr Brangwyn, and others, for a while gave unusual interest to the hoardings.

Besides all this, the armies now were full of men not only sharply alive to all their surroundings, and to the infinitely various human reactions to them, but also

able to tell in letters the things which could be told, the trifles of the daily life and companionship, the unconquerable humanity of the whole inhuman existence out there. Mostly, no doubt, they falsified it; in part from necessity, for the truth about much of the life of the Front would have come too near things that would not pass the Censor; in part from their own courageous simplicity which liked to keep the tones down to simple levels. "Ole Bill" and his "better 'ole"; all the war jokes, with the pictures of patient bewildered soldiers in a landscape of savage shell-bursts indifferent to everything except some irrelevant trifle, and that as absorbing or exasperating as it would have been if they were waiting for a bus on some street corner at home—this kind of thing may have had a certain falseness. But it had its truth too, and its value. It had its share in getting rid of sentiment and hysteria. If we talked less now of "little Belgium" and "the Hun," it was largely because we were picking up both the ironies and the genialities of the fighting soldier. And it had the value of making between home and the Front the only possible link, for none could ever have been made of the grim realities. Those who were out there had that in their souls which could never be approached by even the utmost effort of imagination by those who were not.

This was part of a poignancy of the occasional meetings without which, after all, pictures and letters would not have meant so much. When men came home on leave, near as they brought the war in some ways, in the other, deeper ways, these meetings seemed rather to make more impassable that dark chasm between the Front and home. To parents and to wives aching with expectation of their man, his coming at last and the hours of companionship were shot through with a vein of sadness, however they might struggle against it, the

sadness of feeling that the inmost centre of his life, that in which he was really and truly living, was shut away, incommunicable. In the vast majority of cases the men did not want to talk about it; they left it "over there," and the longing, when they came home, was for the placid familiar things—the tidy bathroom (that always first), sheets and a bed, meals on a table-cloth, and idle hours, like a week-end of the old civilian days. But the real barrier was not in these wishes of theirs; it was more subtle and impenetrable. It was simply the fact that the world of the Front was not this world at all; it might have been on another planet; and no talk, no effort of sympathy and love, could bring the one world into the other.

Indeed even in the most external ways it was from another world that they came, the men who crowded Victoria Station through the last half of the war. The thronging ghosts which to older generations will always haunt those platforms have uncouth shapes which are hardly human. Distorted with pack and equipment, bayonets and entrenching tools, mess-tins and haversacks, and rifles slung on a shoulder, clumsy in their heavy greatcoats, mediæval in the sleeveless leather jerkins and the flattish steel helmets which they were wearing since the early summer of 1916, they looked entirely creatures of some other life. It was hardly like a mere difference of clothes and belongings; it was as if that half-secret, underground world of the front line, which grew, in place of grass and hedges, sordid stumps and rusty wire and rotting rags of men, had produced a new race of the right shape to live in it, ponderous little dinosaurs of the battle slime. How much easier if they could have been thought of so! But they were our men. Strapped and belted into all that weight and cumbrousness were the infinite patience and cheeriness and courage of our men, living their perilous lives with

no more of their own than they could carry. So it all had to come with them, to be laughed over and cried over by their women as they tumbled noisily out of the leave train ; to be laboriously mustered again in a few days and make once more the fighting man who tramped off down a platform suddenly grown dreary and cruel to the silent little groups left by the gateway. The leave trains at Victoria never found their poet.

They did much to help the quieter, more unified spirit of the nation through the winter of 1916 and the early months of 1917. After the Somme battle the Front had gone back to the old trench warfare, and the leave turns could work fairly smoothly. It was much, too, that when the soldiers came they found that the strangeness was not all on one side ; home was very different. This was not merely because of all the war work. People were beginning to do without many things they had been accustomed to, even if it were only in a lack of constant hot water, sugar, and a certain amplitude of meals. To London, at least, air raids had in the summer and autumn brought something of the reality of war. A good many suburbs now had known bombardment, the frightful noise, the stabbing flash of explosions and the glare of burning houses ; had seen shattered buildings and the ghastliness of torn bodies in blood and mud. But no longer quite helplessly. They had seen another kind of glare on the night of 2nd September, when a Zeppelin was brought down in flames near Enfield by a fighting aeroplane, and had flocked out eagerly next day to see its charred and twisted ruin. Then as, three weeks later, two more were brought down in Essex, and a week after that another at Potters Bar, confidence began to grow. This was not mere raiding at the enemy's pleasure ; it was part of the war over here, and that was a very different thing to bear. Whatever the enemy's fleet of Zeppelins might

he, our dealing with them could not but become more and more effective; and they must take long, and be very costly, to replace. In fact, after one more raid in November, when two airships were brought down at sea on their return journey, the country hardly saw Zeppelins again. They killed many—thirty to forty deaths had become an average casualty list—but the material damage done was never anything like what the Germans were induced by their authorities to believe. One of the exasperations in England of the raids was that the Government, for fear of giving information about a raid which might act as a guide to subsequent raiders, suppressed facts, and we had to see the enemy's *communiqués* convincing the rest of the world that all kinds of serious things had happened to us. Neutrals visiting London were said to be amazed to find so much of it standing.

But the first battling with Zeppelins was not the only excitement of the autumn. There was a much bigger one—the tanks. On 15th September the first of these grotesque monsters had lumbered across the Somme trenches—an utter and complete surprise. Not the least of the excitement was that at last we were ahead in a device for modern war, at last we had done something that the Germans had not invented first. Zestfully people read of the queer things—how they could waddle across pits and trenches, and wade through barbed wire; how they rose like some ungainly beast against walls and tree stumps and pushed them over on their way; how they bore down invulnerably, spitting fire, upon German strong-points and machine-gun nests, and cleared them out. Then came the wonder of how such things could ever have been kept secret. For obviously they must have taken months of experiment, months to construct. How had it been done, where had it been done, without a word getting out? The thrill



was extraordinary and immensely exhilarating. We had indeed waked up about munitions, if our workshops, besides making possible the devastating days of gun-fire on the Somme, and the incessant shelling now along all the Front, could turn out in the mass wholly new war engines like these. And we must be growing vastly more efficient in war ways to have kept the secret. The name had done it, people said : " Tanks " was such an innocent reply to questions about what might be being made in a place where steel plates and rivets were going in large quantities. Somehow the armies might need quantities of tanks, for one of the odd aspects of the war now was that no one would be surprised at a mass supply of anything for the troops ; and it was much more ingenious to have a perfectly prompt reply to questions than to provoke curiosity by refusing an answer. Even when the need for secrecy was over, the name was too good to lose ; it was taken up with an almost affectionate glee. Whatever the authorities may have intended to call their new armoured cars, as tanks they appeared, and tanks they remained so persistently that, when they had to have a corps of their own, it could be nothing but the Royal Tank Corps. Rumour began to tell, after the event, of how they had been made and tested somewhere in open desolate parts of Norfolk, but little was really known at the time. Nor did people want to know much. The great thing was that they had been made, and had sprung a vast surprise. The public was far too pleased to pay much attention to the critics who said that we had only bungled things again by bringing the tanks into action on a small scale, and so giving the secret away, instead of waiting to send them over upon the enemy in masses that might quite possibly have finished the war.

The nation in these months was not feeling critical. It had the sense of finding its feet in the war, and did

not expect the results of its pulling together to appear too soon. Next year, surely. And because it was as a whole so busy, it paid little heed to those who were still unappeasably critical. They had not, in this new phase, been leaving the nation alone. They had had a fresh mouthpiece in the summer. Mr Hughes, the Prime Minister of Australia, was in England, and he had been very busy "spellbinding" up and down the country on the iniquities of Germany and the civilising force of the British Empire, and on the plain duties which these propositions laid upon his audiences. Much had been made of him, even to creating for him a brand-new constitutional precedent; he was the first Dominion Prime Minister to take part in a meeting of the Cabinet. He had also been one of the Government delegates to a conference in Paris in June, which was heavily coloured by the kind of spirit he represented. This was an Economic Conference of the Allies, to envisage the possibilities of an agreement by which, after the war, their trade should become a kind of mutual possession, excluding Germany. Economists may have had their own views about such a mirage, but they kept quiet. For of course behind all the war spirit there was the long jealousy in Great Britain of German trade, indeed the conviction that "der Tag" had been designed, whatever the German war-lords might think, to capture a world supremacy in commerce, and that "Kultur" was a blind for wholly material motives. All the fear of German trade methods, the alarm about her cheap efficient production, the talk about slavery to work and money-making which made this possible, about their insinuating commercial travellers, "dumping," and the undermining of our markets, concentrated on the flattering vision of liberation from this rivalry. Germany had staked her all, and we must see to it that she did not contrive to get the most important part of her stake

back off the table while we were not looking. The war must not be taken as a merely military affair, to end when a military decision should be reached. We must not be fools enough to defeat Germany's armies, and then leave her with the trade victory she really coveted.

Every autumn and winter of these years brought, perhaps naturally, some kind of uneasy movement of the national mind, some kind of worry about our war life; and the better mood of 1916 did not escape this. When Parliament met in the autumn it began at once to ask whether we were taking seriously enough the subject of food supplies. Some carefulness there had been, but it was not by any means general, and it was not spreading. In fact, habits of economy were rather declining than increasing, for one or two reasons. To a certain extent economy had been involuntary—the restraint of rising prices. But two things were by now happening to counteract this: first, an enormous expansion of war work at piece-rates or at good wages with bonus additions, and secondly, an addition of war bonuses to most fixed salaries. The circle was beginning to revolve which was to prove so calamitous after the war—high prices, due in a minor degree to the hampering of trade, but much more to the creation of money by the Government's huge credits for its needs, and then the distribution of more money in salaries and wages to meet the prices. Another reason was that as people became more and more occupied in war tasks they felt themselves freed from the stinting and care which had once been the only kind of contribution most of them could make to the demands of the crisis. Now they were contributing service and might justly feed their tired bodies; they could mostly afford to do so, and they thought the agitation about supplies rather fussy. Forced over and over again to recognise how much better the Germans had done most things since the war

began, this was the one point on which the British public felt superior. It had always regarded as fussy the way in which at the very start of the war Germany, under the military thumb till it had no life left to call its own, had had some of its main food supplies rationed. Later on, seeing the reproduction in our newspapers of bread cards and meat cards in use over there, people had interpreted them hopefully as signs of a danger from which we were free. The German might vaunt his security from air raids, his towns cheerfully ablaze with light while we groped in darkness ; but if he could still sit at his ease at café tables, there was precious little on them, and that chiefly unappetising substitutes, like acorn coffee. Leave him his hungry satisfaction in his street lamps ; we had good sound food behind our carefully drawn blinds. Here lay the Government's difficulty. Much as they needed the first call on food supplies, much as they had to control freights and cargoes, they must not risk such a discouragement as a system of food control might induce. That step, in view of the feeling that food was the one thing in which we were more comfortable than Germany, might shake unpleasantly the nation's *moral*. Yet the matter could not be left quite untouched. A compromise was found in the announcement in mid-November of the appointment of a Food Controller, Lord Devonport, but not of any system of control. All that was said on the latter point was that he would have his system ready, if and when it should be necessary. For the moment he did no more than restrict, in December, restaurant and hotel meals to two courses at luncheon and three at dinner. So the situation was met as well as it could have been at the moment ; the existence of a Food Controller might make people a little more heedful ; and his first action had dropped on a carelessness which everyone could impugn, without coming too close home.

For those who were still conscientiously on the alert for miserable half-measures, here was another. We had not got out of the habit of them, even in the old troublesome matter of recruiting. The Compulsory Service Act, after all, had not satisfied the zealous patriots. To them it was far too heavily tainted with the relics of voluntarism in the provisions about exemptions and the tribunals. There were two lines of attack: first, that far too many "indispensables" were still managing to keep out of the army; and secondly, that avoidance of military service on conscientious grounds ought never to have been allowed. In the former matter the Government was in another dilemma: they needed an ever-increasing industrial effort; they needed increased food supplies; and though women's work was becoming more and more effective it was only slowly releasing men. This was especially true of agriculture, the difficulties on either side being made plain enough in the House of Lords by Lord Derby, as Director of Recruiting, and Lord Selborne, as Chairman of the Committee on Food Supplies. There was a steady appeal for the breaking up of more land for crops, which was no work for amateur labourers; and in general, agriculture, if depleted too seriously of its men, could at the best only maintain existing production, and could certainly not increase it. For the first time England began to learn that agricultural labour was not the unskilled occupation which an exaggeratedly industrial age had thought it. Slightly bewildered by this discovery, the tribunals remained always weak in dealing with rural "indispensables." They did in time become more strict about labourers; they were always frightened of the farmer, and to the end far too many fit men of that class managed to stay at home. In the matter of conscientious objection there was not so much a dilemma as a flat contradiction of views, a much more bitter thing. If exemption on this

ground had been confined to the Society of Friends, with their unbroken tradition of refusal of every kind of conflict, it would have been generally accepted. But this would have been a sectarian provision out of accord with modern ideas. No spiritual tenet could now be given an exclusive institutional connection, and it had to be recognised that a point of conscience might be common to men outside as well as inside organised communities. The door was thus opened, however, to objections to military service which, though they might be "conscientious" in a wide sense, were more political than religious, and had never been contemplated when the exemption clauses of the Act were passed. The question was naturally raised whether the words "military service" should not be strictly interpreted in relation to the individual conscience as meaning the bearing of arms; and whether, in face of the vast field of occupations only nominally military—the Pay Corps, the Medical Corps, office work on the lines of communication and in the back areas, Base camp duties of all kinds—the tribunals ought to pay any attention to objectors who refused to do anything of that kind, refused even work on the land, because it contributed to the bearing of arms by other people. This kind of argument was strengthened by the fact that even many of the Quakers had not held back from ambulance-driving and hospital service; and a Non-Combatants Corps had been formed for various duties in France.

A further point of criticism was gaining ground, though it was not yet as vigorous as it became in the following year. Mr Churchill, after retiring from office, had more than once spoken in the House of an evasion of which France was much more aware than England (it was on his return from service there that he had spoken of it)—the *embusqué* in uniform. There were, he said, far too many people who had indeed gone into

the army, but had not been, and meant never to be, in the fighting. They were in all kinds of secure employment in France, they could be seen at home in trains and buses safe, in their khaki, from criticism, but no more doing their duty, and far less honourable, than the men who refused to put on khaki at all.

Late in September the appointment was announced of a Man-Power Distribution Board. It did not appease all the criticism. Would it be more than a kind of super-tribunal, subject probably to all the weaknesses of the ordinary tribunals? What was needed was not multiplication of duties, but a new forcefulness and determination behind the existing duties. That brought us to another change of Government. It proved to be a far bigger event than the making of the Coalition in the spring of 1915. It was no mere change of Ministers, but an attempt to make at last the sort of Ministerial machine that a war called for, with new offices and new functions as well as new men. Unfortunately it happened in a way that tarnished all its good aspects with associations of intrigue, and turned a sound reconstruction of ideas into the similitude of a rather mysterious scramble. This was largely due to the fact that the impulse came, not from a more or less spontaneous tide of opinion, as in the case of the Coalition, but from a deliberate newspaper agitation working on the public mind; and at a time when the Press was under a control which had in other cases been prompt to suppress criticism and rumour, the openness and impunity of this agitation looked like connivance in some high places. The agitation began towards the end of 1916, directing itself upon the Prime Minister. It did not, indeed, revive the worst of the earlier calumnies about him and Mrs Asquith, but it was in a key which in fact played upon all the wanton bitterness that had inspired them. The suggestions that Mr Asquith was not the man to

lead a War Cabinet—whether they were based upon his age, or upon his mental habits and his lawyer-like precision, with all its limitations, in a situation often requiring a certain recklessness of speech and even of decision—could merge too easily in many minds into hints that it was not merely inaptness for a time of war, but a deep and serious alienation from the war which was hampering him and the country. Whatever the hints were, the broad implication was clear, that the country needed now someone much more sharply and determinedly *in* the war; it needed someone able to put aside all else till the war was won, to see the war in relation to nothing but the war; it needed above all someone who had proved his capacity to be rousing, stimulating, dynamic. If the reference was not obvious enough, care was soon taken to make it so. On 1st December was published a letter from Mr Lloyd George to the Prime Minister, saying that he could not remain in the Government unless the machinery for directing the war were “drastically overhauled,” and proceeding to propose a War Committee which excluded Mr Asquith. The smooth reason given for this proposal was that, as the War Committee must sit every day, and the Prime Minister had other work to do, it would be better for him not to be a member of it, but to attend it occasionally in consultation. Even at a time like this, when a good many questions of taste had long given way to the urgency of war, a newspaper campaign culminating in such a letter had to cover itself in a very lavish cloaking of patriotism—and it need hardly be said that to a great part of the nation no amount of cloaking availed.

A letter of this kind communicated to the Press could not be answered. On 5th December Mr Lloyd George resigned, and a few hours later the Prime Minister resigned also. The King went through the



constitutional form of sending for Mr Bonar Law, and he went through the form of failing to construct a Ministry. On 6th December Mr Lloyd George was sent for, and the new Government was quickly made. There were several important changes of office besides the retirement of Mr Asquith. Sir Edward Grey, who had become Viscount Grey, went with him, and Mr Balfour took the Foreign Office. Lord Derby's work as Director of Recruiting was rewarded with the War Office, which Mr Lloyd George had held since Lord Kitchener's death. Mr Bonar Law became Chancellor of the Exchequer. But more important than these appointments was the new type of Government machine which now revealed itself. The experiment of a small War Cabinet constructed inside a Government gave way, by a slight but significant change, to the idea of a distinct War Cabinet of Ministers without Departments at the head of a largely increased Ministerial body. The principle of a compact supreme group having been established, the rest of the Government could be fully expanded to cover the needs of the war without the old fear of cumbrousness and slowness of action. Four new Departments appeared. Three of them carried on wholesale the success of the Ministry of Munitions in bringing the business man straight into Government, with the offices of the Shipping Controller, the Food Controller, and the Ministry of Blockade, which, though to the end the public knew little of it, worked by enlisting the skill of big industrial and commercial men, with their lifelong experience of the habits of the world's trade, and of the movements of crops and manufactures, to interfere with Germany's supplies in a way that Government officials or the navy could never have achieved by themselves. The business man was also brought straight in by such appointments as those of Sir Albert Stanley, chairman of the London Underground Railways, to the Board of

Trade, and Sir Joseph Maclay as Controller of Shipping ; neither of them was a politician. The fourth new Department, the Ministry of Labour, was largely a gesture, the delimitation of its functions and the question of its relation to all the industrial duties of the Home Office and the Board of Trade being rather vague. But there had for years past been a growing opinion that we should recognise, as other nations had done, the necessity in a great modern community of a separate Government Department for labour ; and the very wide control of industry now by the Government made a good opportunity for the innovation.

Disquieting aspects of the change of Government did not pass without comment. The strong public opinion in its support had been too openly organised by the determination of a powerful owner of newspapers to effect a change, and put the man of his choice at the head of affairs ; it was a very ostentatious proof of the ease with which a vast newspaper-reading public could be manipulated. Moreover Mr Lloyd George's letter to Mr Asquith took on an unpleasant appearance of plausibility when it was seen that the reasons he then suggested for a Prime Minister's surrender of the War Cabinet to other people did not apply in his own case. Beyond entrusting the leadership of the House of Commons to Mr Bonar Law, he apparently found in the "general duties" of a Prime Minister none of those obstacles he had formerly perceived to membership of the War Cabinet, which he now constructed of himself, Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, and Mr Arthur Henderson. Mr Henderson's membership was interesting. Whatever crevasses might have opened in Mr Lloyd George's reputation with the world of labour, he was still able to placard the support of the official party and the trade union leaders. Beyond question, too, he had the public mind with him. Points of scruple counted for little

in the general feeling that he possessed a combination of force or personality and tireless flexibility of mind, ready to turn instantly in the vital direction of the moment, which were pre-eminently the qualities required in the supreme charge of a nation at war. The country had struggled long for unity of purpose, and had more or less achieved it. It had then called out for leadership, and had now achieved that. The new Prime Minister was easily the most stimulating figure in public life. His significance had the queerest kind of illumination a month or two later, when some people living in Derby, a mother, her daughter, and her son-in-law, were arrested on a charge of conspiracy to murder Mr Lloyd George and Mr Henderson. They were said to be anarchists, but of a most bizarre turn of mind, for they had been devising as their weapons darts poisoned with strychnine and curare. They were sentenced to heavy terms of penal servitude.

For the rest, it was a winter of no vivid impressions. The New Year of 1917 brought with it a 50 per cent. increase in railway fares, war bread—to economise wheat supplies by the compulsory use of parts of the grain which in peace time were removed from flour—a limitation of the use of sugar for sweets, and an experimental fixing of future prices of potatoes, which provoked an outcry from the big growers. A terrible explosion at a munition factory in East London, killing 69 people and injuring about 450 others, and half-wrecking several streets, was a reminder, if any had been needed, that volunteering for this work meant more than hard toil; it meant real peril. Not the least, perhaps, of the minor successes of the war was that with so much dilution of the labour there were not far more accidents of this kind. A War Loan was raised during January to an accompaniment of much propaganda from pulpits. The most obvious interest of it was that it showed how we

were beginning to think in the new terms of money; the Loan produced, besides a good deal of conversion of bonds, £1,000,000,000 of fresh subscriptions, and one single big business, the Prudential Assurance Company, put itself down handsomely for £20,000,000. In another event of the month—the Allies' reply to a tentative Peace Note from the United States—no one was much interested. The restatement of the only terms the Allies would contemplate—complete liberation and restoration of the small states which had been overrun, and full reparation to France, Russia, and other invaded countries—was little more than a formality. In so far as the public generally took any notice of the affair, it was to wonder, rather caustically, whether America was ever going to do anything more energetic than the *sending of Notes*.

She was going to, quite soon now. At the end of January 1917 the German High Command took the fatal step which brought the United States into hostilities. The exchange of Notes in 1915 on the submarine campaign had ended in the Germans undertaking not to sink merchantmen without warning to enable passengers and crew to leave a ship; and after the sinking of the *Sussex* the American Government had insisted that this must apply even to armed merchantmen. But now, on 31st January, the German Government issued a notice to neutrals of unrestricted submarine warfare. Within a "barred zone," which they laid down, all vessels would be liable to be sunk without warning. Whatever its unwisdom from some points of view, this was for Germany the plainest way of bidding for a decision. Submarines had become most formidable vessels. Like aeroplanes, they had undergone the forced concentration of skill and inventiveness aroused by the war needs, which had developed them within two years to a point they might hardly have reached in twenty

years of peace. They were no longer small diving boats, firing torpedoes only, with a narrow range of cruising; they were powerful under-water ships, able to take long voyages (one, the *Deutschland*, peacefully equipped, had actually crossed the Atlantic and appeared sensationally in New York harbour), and armed with guns protruded from below when the boat was running on the surface. With a large fleet of this kind, and methods of either locating or fighting them in a most rudimentary state as yet, the Germans, ahead of us again—for we had never thought of our commerce being attacked in a way that the navy could not deal with—might well think of bringing England to her knees. No longer hampered by having to expose themselves in giving warning, which had meant letting many ships go by when breaking surface would have been dangerous, submarines keeping down for their work of destruction could increase it enormously.

The Government, still deciding that voluntary food control, like voluntary recruiting, must be tried to its utmost limits, saw the new German menace not as justifying systematic rationing, but as a means of extra pressure on private action. They started to publish prominently statistics of the weekly sinkings of ships, as a warning; the form, however, in which they were published, not giving the totals of tonnage, but the number of vessels, had no very alarming appearance, and did not press aside other interests. One of the most comforting at the moment was a long statement by Mr Barnes in February on the subject of pensions. This was a matter which by now touched thousands of homes, with all the men who had “done their bit,” and found themselves back in civilian life, so handicapped by wounds or gassing that the future was dark to them and their families. They were by this time wearing the little silver badges with the Royal monogram

in the centre which protected them against the people who were still hunting for shirkers. In its larger responsibilities to them it was never supposed that the country would fail. But there was great reassurance when Mr Barnes's statement promised to co-ordinate properly the whole business of these responsibilities in a Government Department of its own. He detailed, besides the actual pensions, schemes for training in new trades men disabled for their old occupations. A great and admirable private effort had already given life and hope, in a measure no one would have believed possible, to one whole class of the tragically disabled—the blinded men. For many years blind men of courage had been setting themselves to bring to an end the old frightful isolation of the blind from the normal activities of life. It happened that shortly before the war a prominent newspaper proprietor, Mr Arthur Pearson, had gone blind, and he brought unimpaired into this new life of the blind world the energy and the power of "getting at" the public which a successful newspaper proprietor must have. Under his leadership the men blinded in the war (and modern warfare made far more of these casualties than the old campaigns) were not allowed for a moment to feel themselves hopelessly disabled or even excessively handicapped. A pleasant enclosed place in Regent's Park—St Dunstan's—had been generously given for his work, and its name became a household word; Mr Pearson saw to that. By his own courageous example, and great wisdom in his training methods, he wrought miracles. This was one of the happiest of the many ways in which development of ideas was immensely quickened by war needs. At the same time a refuge was being brought into being for others whose wounds cut them off from normal life quite as much as the blind. A fund had been raised for buying the "Star and Garter" at Richmond and erecting on its fine site a new building

to be presented to the Queen as a permanent home for the hopelessly disabled.

Marvels of surgery were being done for them. But indeed the whole medical service of the war was wonderful. There had never been anything like it. The prophylactic work kept these millions of men in camps, in the frightful conditions of the trenches, and the none too sanitary conditions of rest billets, without a single serious outbreak of enteric or other such diseases. Nor was it only the hopelessly disabled for whom the marvels of surgery were available ; these were almost as common in the war area as in the great hospitals at home. Out there badly wounded men passed into the hands of the most famous of surgeons : the shell-shocked into the care of the most brilliant brain and nerve specialists. Yet the great men could have done little had it not been for the thousands of general practitioners who, making what arrangements they could for their practices, went out to lavish in the advanced dressing stations and the casualty clearing stations the skill without which most of the bad cases would never have lived to come into the specialists' hands. That service was perhaps the only one of the war in which the armies never lost confidence. For all the tragedy, a kind of happiness seems to hover about the memory of the crowds of men who became so familiar a sight in the ill-fitting blue uniforms and pink ties which, when the men were out of doors, looked even uglier with the khaki caps. There were times when there seemed to be almost as much of that blue about as there was of khaki.

Though less open, perhaps, than in the earlier years, when it had time and again been disappointed, the persistent looking to the next year for a decision had really been as strong as ever through the winter of 1916. Yet the first big news of the war in 1917, at the end of February, was almost too startling. The Germans

along a wide section of the British Front, from Arras to Soissons, were retreating. What weakness did this mean, what admission of the strain of Verdun and the whole past year on the German armies? And was it going to be sprung upon and turned into a disastrous opening of their lines? That kind of hope was short-lived. The movement had been too secretly prepared, too swiftly carried out, to be taken advantage of, and it was also too large. To occupy along that length of Front ground to a depth of about eight miles at the narrowest point, and as much as twenty miles at the widest was so huge a task that the advancing troops never really harried the retreat; prisoners and captured guns were in disappointingly insignificant numbers. In the end the Germans were discovered to have retired to a far more effectively fortified line, shorter by some forty miles than the old line they had had to defend; it was "the Hindenburg line," which now became part of our war talk. After his smashing campaign on the Eastern Front, Hindenburg had come West to the appointment which virtually, though not formally, was the Command-in-Chief; and this strategic retreat was his first work. It had been too successful for us; but it was a retreat, and this fact, and the capture immediately afterwards of Vimy Ridge, the epic day of the Canadians, with its 20,000 prisoners and 250 guns, might well mean that strain was telling on the Germans.

This was the great hope. It saw no check to itself in the event now which was a few months later to destroy it. As suddenly as the German retreat came the news of the Russian Revolution. Unexpected in one sense, it was in another, people began to find, something that they had more than half expected after all. In the first shock of the war Russia had lost all her old associations in the minds of the British, and had signified only a force which we hoped might be gigantic. Then,



as common sense came with better understanding of the war, we began to wonder how, after the long years of indignation against absolutist Czardom and sympathy with Russian exiles and their passion for liberty, we could ever have imagined that Russia would be anything but a very lame giant. Her checks, and soon her heavy defeats, had emphasised the lesson; the Allies had all been caught, no doubt, less fully armed than the Germans, but Russia had had besides a corrupt oligarchy to make even what preparation there had been largely a sham. Her people must know it; and it was impossible to think that after such a murderous betrayal of them they would after the war endure the old tyranny. Yet they had, Russian literature had always told us, their intense personal loyalty; the Grand Duke Nicholas had led them well, and when, in the summer of 1916, the Czar announced that he was taking over the command of his armies, people had thought that this might be the way of the great change: he and people together might free themselves from the soulless engine that Czardom had become. This was not easy to believe; the Czar's own qualities and capacities seemed too insignificant. Yet the blind faith of the Russian masses in "the little Father" might hold firm. The news of the Revolution, therefore, was strangely compounded of the expected and the sudden. But the expectedness prevailed over the suddenness, and long familiarity with the idea of revolution in Russia took all alarming quality from the news, and coloured the English mind to accept it without any grave anxiety about its effects on the war. The Government telegraphed to Prince Lvoff, welcoming the change which made Russia a democratic partner of democratic allies.

There was anyhow little time to think about it, for the United States declared war. Unappeasable grumblers said it was too late, and people in general doubted

whether, apart from a certain tightening of the blockade pressure on Germany, the entry of America now could have much more than a moral effect. She was not wasting time; she had watched our experiences and went straight to conscription. The millions of men which that must mean might be an impressive thought, but we had learned how long it took to make a fighting soldier for this war; we could not let the thought impress us much as we faced again, at a time when any month might be critical, the unending question of our own man-power. Compulsory service had procured for the army since the beginning of the year 100,000 men less than the estimate, and controversy over exemptions, never quite stilled, revived sharply. It had the effect of stiffening the action of the tribunals. They began interpreting "conscience" in a much stricter way. They refused to allow it to include objections to service which were either politically or religiously humanitarian in a broad sense. They reduced valid objection almost entirely to membership of the Society of Friends, or bodies as secure as they in a long tradition. The result was that other objections to service became now mere refusals to serve, and therefore law-breaking; the bulk of applicants for exemption on conscientious grounds were sent to prison. This line of action embittered hopelessly a conflict of views which could never be reconciled. Nothing could bring together those who believed with all that was best in them that the individual conscience was inviolable, and the moral law explicit, and those who, in varying degrees and from varying angles, believed that the social need was paramount. The conscientious objectors themselves, if religious, accepted their sufferings; if politically extreme, made of them fuel for their own fire; the deeper wound was dealt to those who, not themselves coming under the tribunals, had no expiation to offer for the

darkening of the whole moral conception of the world they knew.

But stiffer action by the tribunals, and the other step which the Government now took—the introduction of a Bill enabling the authorities to call up for re-examination men who had been rejected on medical grounds before conscription was introduced—were alike hampered by the two problems which persistently dogged recruiting. The first was the temper of the labour world, whose resentment of compulsory service might always break out at any fresh stage of it. There was acute trouble in the air with a strike of engineers at Barrow, which defied the efforts both of trade union officials and of the Minister of Labour. It lasted from 21st March to 4th April, ending then in a nominal concession by the Government recognising the right of the men to negotiate through their shop stewards (the new portent of the industrial unrest) instead of through the union officials. But the truth was that the strike had been forcibly stopped by threats of drastic use of the Defence of the Realm Act and conscription; and this was a situation which could not lightly be further irritated. The other problem—the old dilemma of the concurrent need for men in the army and in production at home—had become worse than ever with the submarine campaign, which was rapidly taking its graver form as the submarine menace. It had been pressing steadily on us in losses every week of some 12 to 20 ships of over 1600 tons, apart from the smaller ones. In the third week of April these figures leapt terrifyingly to 40.

Warnings and exhortations poured out from the Food Controller. Some were addressed to tradesmen; grocers, for instance, were meeting the shortage of sugar by a device of their own—refusing to sell sugar except to customers making other purchases—and this had to be forbidden. Others were addressed to the rich, who were

asked to eat no potatoes and the least possible quantity of bread in order to leave those food-stuffs to people who depended more upon them. For general use a "recommended" ration scale was issued. But again the only definitely imposed restrictions were upon meals in restaurants. These naturally caused most criticism, from the mere fact of their publicity, and newspapers had been publishing angry letters about "food-hogs." The restrictions imposed in December had been ineffective. An Order was now issued rationing the supply of bread and meat to hotels and restaurants, and compelling them to one meatless day a week and five days a week without potatoes; the Order did not apply to restaurants in which the total charge for a meal, including drink, did not exceed 1s. 3d. An Order was also issued concerning cakes and pastry, limiting the quantities of sugar and flour used for those purposes; and forbidding the serving in a restaurant of any afternoon tea costing more than 6d. or including more than 2 oz. of bread, cake or biscuits.

Another and more far-reaching result of the anxiety was the Corn Production Bill. This established fixed prices for corn to encourage especially the breaking up of ground which would not at first produce remunerative crops without a bounty. It also enabled the authorities to supervise cultivation, and to prosecute occupiers of land who were neglecting it, or not making adequate use of it. Most important of all, the Bill dealt with labour conditions which, owing to the inevitable weakness and difficulties of the trade union idea among the scattered and remote agricultural workers, had been lamentably left aside by the great industrial movements. A minimum wage was established for farm labourers, with a statutory weekly half-holiday. What was even more valuable was the appointment of a Central Agricultural Wages Board, with Wages Boards in every

county, consisting of an equal number of farmers and labourers with a few independent "appointed members" nominated by the President of the Board of Agriculture, under an impartial chairman. These Boards in their working proved to be far more than mere wage machinery. They had powers of inquiry which, since they were for adjusting the minimum wage in cases of physical or other defects, let a flood of light into labour conditions on farms, especially in the more backward counties.

This was one of the measures of the time which were producing a curious result of the war upon men's minds. They caught sight of a marvellously encouraging vision. Just in the same way as the urgent national need had stimulated beyond all conceptions the pace of advance in flying, for example, so it seemed to have brought on at a bound social and ameliorative action by the State which in peace time made way so slowly and against such dead-weight of mistrust and vested interests. Government control of railways had worked from the very first day of the war, and old vexatious complications of the movement of goods had disappeared. Control of mines had followed. The big industries, textiles, boots, engineering, shipbuilding, steel and iron, without losing all the elasticity of private ownership, were under regulation as to profits on capital, wages and hours, and the handling of industrial disputes. Moreover, a whole vital region of industrial life, which the State had only been able to penetrate inch by inch against the employer's view of his rights, had suddenly been thrown wide open to supervision and direction. The notion of factory and workshop inspection widened out amazingly into the most sweeping conceptions of duty towards the welfare of workers. War needs provided plausible overriding of still reluctant employers on two broad grounds. Factories must not only be kept running, but running

smoothly, with ample labour and maximum efficiency. This meant, firstly, that conditions must be as attractive as possible to ensure the stability of the labour; and secondly, that there must be provision for more than formal healthiness, there must be also precautions against fatigue, possibilities of recreation and change of mind to keep up energy. So trained welfare workers and nurses, rest-rooms and educational classes, enlarged the sphere of factory inspectors. It was, of course, only in new Government factories (except for the few enlightened firms which had introduced all these activities long before the war) that the fresh ideas, with their accompaniments of model housing and so on, could be put into operation at their best. But over the whole of large-scale industry they had their influence, not least because war necessities made far more public the study of industrial fatigue and impairment of output, which in peace time an enterprising employer would see to have lessons for his pocket. Supervision of industrial conditions could never, it was thought, return to the old narrow limits.

Legislation was taking its strides too. There was not only the Corn Production Bill. The report of the Speaker's Conference on Electoral Reform had issued in a new Representation of the People Bill, simplifying the whole franchise, and including women—the comprehensive Bill which had been so insuperable a problem of the militant suffrage days. The war had solved it. Women had taken a place in the national life which swept away for good all the old notions of their disqualifications for plenary citizenship; it was in pride now, not in any need of proof of their case, that they paraded, in a deputation to the Prime Minister at the end of March, the multiplicity of uniforms they were wearing. In April the new President of the Board of Education, Mr H. A. L. Fisher, introduced a Bill so

wide alike in its immediate proposals and in the ultimate prospects it opened that again a movement was made which only years of effort in peace conditions could have commended to the House. Beholding all this assertion of the right and the power of the State, observing, too, that control produced none of the disastrous results, the fear of which would never have given way except to an overmastering crisis, how could the social enthusiast fail to hope that the country could not now go back to the old unorganised, uncontrolled conflict of private interests ?

Nor was it only Government control of which he was thinking. The country had learned more than that. It had seen, in spite of all the industrial trouble which persisted, some recognition of what could be achieved by capital and labour pulling together instead of apart. Why should that effort of understanding not leave its effects behind ? The Report of the Whitley Committee on Industrial Conciliation, published in June of this year, promised help, especially as, if not fully aware of the significance of the shop-steward movement, it did grasp the tendency towards decentralising union methods, in proposing a hierarchy of councils from a National Industrial Council down through Regional Councils to Shop Councils. Composed of employers and employed, the councils were to act, not merely on the appearance of a matter of dispute, but continuously, as in some degree a joint consideration of interests, which might grow very near to joint management of industry. The report was to prove too optimistic. But at the time it was welcomed. For the air was full of that without which all these hopes for the future, whether of Government control or of a better private outlook in industry, would never have been as strong as they were. The great foundation must be the new comradeship of the army and the munition works, the vast friendly

acquaintance of classes with one another, and the good sense which must surely spring from that. There lay the hope that, once the country had begun to learn—even if driven into it—what a really national social consciousness might be, it could never quite lose sight of it again.

Even in the most material ways it had learned a great lesson. It had found out that it could spend immensely more than had been conceived of as possible. No one would for a moment want the war level of taxation to remain. But if we could at extreme need screw the year's revenue up, as we were doing in 1917, to over £638,000,000, then obviously even in peace our old figures of £200,000,000 or so were far too timid. Income tax at 5s. and 6s. in the £ could not be permanent, but 9d. or 1s. was unnecessarily lenient. The Excess Profits Duty was a form of control of capitalistic interests too useful to give up; and the Entertainments Tax, and some at least of the increase of duties on intoxicants and tobacco, were clearly impositions the public would stand rather than go without these things. The country was discovering, therefore, not only what social effort it might put out, but how much it could afford. The Education Estimates, under Mr Fisher's new Bill, showed an advance of £4,000,000. Moreover, Ministers were learning to spend courageously, and get rid of the false idea that niggling is economy.

But of course there were two sides to that matter. Bold spending, admirable enough in business enterprise, was apt to look reckless when the big business men now in Government Departments had their hands on public money. Did unstinted provision of actual war supplies involve all the costliness of much that was going on? Complaints in the House of Lords that within two years the Government had taken over in London alone eight large hotels, two clubs, a town hall, and fifty other more



or less public buildings for office work, subject to ultimate compensation and liabilities for repair, made only one item of the indictment. All over the country huts had sprung up like a plague. It was hardly credible that in the early days there had been reason to complain of the slowness with which shelter had been provided for the first recruits. Now standardisation of pattern and mass-production of the material allowed the merest wave of any official wand to plant somewhere a dozen of the long low huts, with their iron stoves, which must frame so many memories in the minds of the war generation—army memories of barrack-rooms with rows of bedding and kit, orderly-rooms and company offices with weak-legged tables and piles of army forms, the nests in which sergeant-majors and soldier-clerks led lives enviably remote from parades and fatigues; civilian memories of incessantly clicking typewriters, incorrigible draughts, and the exasperating clatter of feet upon the thin floors. Huts invaded the open spots of London; those built on the ground of the lake in St James's Park—drained to prevent its reflection locating the Whitehall neighbourhood to enemy aircraft—had a sort of fame of their own; huts to the extent of positive cities settled down upon Salisbury Plain and the Aldershot sandhills, Catterick and Cannock Chase; creeping lines of huts ran out at some point from almost every town of any size; pools of huts spread in all manner of quiet places which for any reason might be convenient for troops. Huts had become an immense business, and they made some big fortunes.

A related subject of complaint was the enormous increase of clerical staffs. The Ministry of Munitions was said to have grown in numbers by 100,000 in the space of two months. During the first rush of impromptu effort to meet the strain, staffs might reasonably have had to be increased without stopping to

think. But had not the time come for more careful organisation and saving of labour? That line of argument was to gain in vigour during the next twelve months, with every reconsideration of our man-power. In the summer of 1917, with all the old Departments still adding fresh work to themselves, and the new Departments—Shipping Control, Food Control, Munitions, Labour, Pensions, Blockade—still discovering what they had to do, the civilian army was piling up its millions like the fighting army. Indeed there was no real pressure for economy; the country had not yet had to ask itself very seriously where the money was coming from, and did not much want to ask. The ironies aimed at the “dug-outs” (another piece of war vocabulary) who had found remunerative jobs, and the vastly important young women, who made Government offices acquire the afternoon-tea habit and powdered their noses on the most august hearthrugs, remained as yet indulgent jests. For the money was flowing about in a pleasantly universal fashion. Some might wonder what was going to be the effect after the war of the “flapper” who had drawn a weekly salary as good as her father had earned before the war, of households formerly dependent on one man’s earnings which now had three or four daughters in munitions. Some might wonder, too, what kind of a post-war life was likely to be faced by young men who were now drawing officers’ pay with next to no responsibilities and plenty of amusement to be bought.

There was little hesitation in buying it, either. The tendency to feel that, when nearly everyone had a war job of some kind, or at least a war pressure on the old civilian job, one was free to amuse oneself, had increased rapidly; and 1917 was a strange mixture of moods and behaviour. Strain, anxiety, the imminent shadow of death were there; food and drink were costly, if not

actually restricted; streets were dark at night. Yet all the time people were dining and dancing as never before, the theatres full (*Chu Chin Chow* was at the height of its popularity, and *The Bing Boys* was rivalling it), cinemas beginning to grow into more spacious shape. If there was restlessness in the spending of money there were obvious reasons for this. Nearly everyone was extraordinarily at a loose end, millions away from home, and those still nominally at home conscious that the drain on men and women and the new independences had broken up completely the old settled ties. There was also the grimmer reason, too familiar now for pretence of concealment. Why should anything be grudged to the men who could never know, when a leave ended, whether they would see another? If they felt they could waste no minute, if money seemed insignificant to them, who had any right to criticise them? Who, indeed, had much right to say what life meant beside those who carried theirs in their hands?

Conduct could have little significance except in its relation to the war. In that relation it might have the fullest possible range, from selfless idealism to the mere snatching at the immediate moment; but it depended almost entirely upon the fibre of the individual character. Of authority there was next to none. That which had been the most vigorous side of English religious life in recent years, its efforts to make of faith less a duty in itself than an illumination of strenuous and robust social service, unfortunately ensnared it now. Honourably ashamed of their alienation from the national existence, through a century of torpor followed by a century of rather formal revivification confronted by strong movements of secular thought, the churches had endeavoured to find their way back into that existence by many paths—such as the growing political zeal of the Free Churches, the revaluation by Broad Churchmen of

tradition and belief, devoted effort in slum missions and clubs. But all this meant that the national existence was colouring the mind of the churches rather than the other way round ; and they had little to bring to the war except what they had been giving for years in peace. Not that this was valueless ; example and influence did not fail. The Rev. G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, "Woodbine Willie," was only the best known of many of his kind ; Talbot House at Poperinghe was the home of a spiritual sincerity of effort which was to survive after the war in the organisation of "Toc H." But again it was far too much a question of the individual fibre of the chaplain, not the panoply of a church. Save for some admirable exceptions the army chaplain was to the mass of the soldiers a kind cheery person, who saw to their needs in cigarettes and chocolate, often served them in canteens, and gave them occasionally a bit of the old lost civilian life in some hearty hymns and a brief address. He wore not only an officer's uniform, but the mind of the officers' mess as well. The Roman Catholic chaplains were, of course, in wholly different case ; but in the army as a whole there were few of them. And to the bulk of the world at home, less near the ultimate realities, authority had become even more shadowy ; the doing of jobs and having a good time in the intervals made up the simple formula.

As the summer advanced, the check which the first few months of the new submarine campaign had administered tended to lose its hold. The alarm of the third week of April died down, as it was seen that that sudden big rise in the number of sinkings was not going to set the pace of destruction. Though the mere steadiness of the weekly total at a much lower figure might be a serious enough concern to the authorities, the country at large did not really grasp its meaning. It was, besides, convinced that much of the shortage and

high prices was due to a profiteering "ramp"; and thought so the more when, on the retirement of Lord Devonport in June, his successor, Lord Rhondda, initiated at once a policy of limitation of prices. Lord Devonport, though he had the merit of bringing to the work of the Food Controller the expert knowledge of one who in his business days had been the head of a great firm of wholesale provision merchants, had brought to it also a reputation, from the days of the Port of London strike, of complete lack of sympathy with the classes which were suffering most from high prices. Lord Rhondda's change of policy, therefore, was the more marked. A fixing on 20th July of maximum prices for live cattle was followed by the control of all flour mills of any importance, and the fixing of prices for bread and potatoes. The year's crop of the latter promised so well, and the appeal for potato-growing had been so successfully answered, that the potatoless days were cancelled. Cheered, perhaps a little too easily, by seeing a restriction removed, and believing that fixed prices would bring out held-up supplies, the public lost much of its alarm of the spring.

Again the Government were in one of their frequent dilemmas. Anxious as they might be, in their clear understanding of the gravity of our losses of tonnage, they dared not impose too many restrictions. They had had a fresh warning in the report of an inquiry they had set on foot into the causes of industrial disaffection. Engineers had been striking again, and arrests had had to be made; a railway strike had threatened and had only been averted by Sir Albert Stanley's promise that Government control should continue after the war long enough for a thorough consideration of the hours of work. Apart from actual stoppages of work there was an uneasy sense that labour conditions in general were dangerously restless, and output all the

while precarious. Mr Lloyd George had set committees to work in different areas, and these now reported that, besides the vexed questions of labour dilution and conscription, disaffection was largely due to high prices and the growing number of restrictions. Obviously, then, a policy of fixed prices was to be preferred as long as possible to any more restrictions of purchase by rationing.

In one affair of the summer the Ministry had the labour world on the whole with them. An International Socialist Congress was to be held at Stockholm, and a sudden storm arose in the Commons about the question of granting passports to certain prominent Labour Party members, Mr Ramsay MacDonald and Mr Jowett among them, to attend the Congress. The Government's line at first was to issue the passports on an understanding that no communication should be held with enemy members of the Congress. But an unforeseen incident altered the whole face of the matter. The Seamen's and Firemen's Union, which had just previously brought into the I.L.P. Conference some energetic views about the war from the men who faced the submarine campaign, now refused to allow any ship to sail which was to carry British Labour representatives to a Congress including delegates of the enemy. At the annual conference between the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress Mr Arthur Henderson set himself to persuade the meeting that British representatives should go to Stockholm on the ground that the peoples of the Allies could there present their case to the enemy peoples, and perhaps open their eyes. But the conference was not easy to persuade, and though after an adjournment it did pass a resolution approving of the Stockholm Congress, this was by so small a majority as to be ineffective. There ensued a rather obscure controversy between Mr Henderson, the Prime Minister and Mr

Bonar Law. Mr Henderson had just come back from a visit to Paris, where he had met representatives of French and Russian labour. What the Cabinet had or had not understood beforehand as to his intentions and the opinions he meant to express became simply a matter of point-blank contradiction, beyond solution. The personal upshot was that he resigned from the Cabinet, and Mr Barnes took his place; the general upshot seemed to be that labour, however restless under war control, was not going to dissociate itself from the war. The Trade Union Congress in September passed a resolution against the attendance of British representatives at Stockholm.

The summer and autumn of 1917 were the gravest time of air raids. These were not only a night infliction, now that aeroplanes, instead of airships, were making them. With their swiftness of flight and smallness of mark the planes could raid boldly in the daytime. People were still slow to realise their danger; during a big raid on 7th July, by a fleet of twenty planes, the general impulse was to be out watching the glittering things manœuvring in the sky. But as the raids increased, and perhaps especially because of the killing on 7th July of a number of children in an East End school (Mr Will Crooks, coming from the pitiful scenes of the inquest, had made a fiery speech in the House), it dawned upon the public that daylight raids had one serious aspect which night raids had not. At night people were mostly at home, in the daytime they would normally be moving about in the open. So the question arose of some system of warning on the approach of a raid, to give time for taking cover. There was some hesitation about doing this, mainly on the ground that it might lead to panic; but after a rapid succession of raids at the end of September arrangements were made for giving warning, first by police and

messengers in cars and on bicycles, with large notices, illuminated at night, and then, for greater efficiency and certainty, by sound signals instead of notices—whistles for the "Take cover" and bugles for the "All clear." Boy Scouts immensely enjoyed being used for the "All clear." To most people taking cover meant no more than staying in the safest part of their home or their office building. But from the flimsy crowded two-storey streets of the poorer quarters people flocked into the tubes, which were open to them for the purpose; on moonlit nights these were often crowded as early as half-past five by mothers, with their families camped round them.

Under the Food Controller local committees were set to work in August and September, looking after his scale of limited retail prices, which had now extended to most cereals and some kinds of tea. They had also to attend to the first approach to real rationing. On 3rd August sugar supplies were put upon a new system; everyone had to register with a particular retailer, and no supplies could be obtained except as a registered customer at one shop. This meant that instead of the irregularity of stocks, which had been leading since early in the year to queues at any shop which happened to have a supply, the Government could direct its distribution of sugar with some certainty of supplying every household. But queues, though undesirable, had had a certain salutary effect. The too easy reassurance of the public under fixed prices was calling now for a renewed economy campaign, and this led to a new post under the Food Controller, the Director of Food Economy, to which Sir Arthur Yapp was appointed. In effect it meant using, as a second line to Lord Rhondda's price policy, the system of recommended rations. Sir Arthur Yapp set to work to organise it through the local Food Committees.



There was another organisation too. Some of it did not mean very much to the ordinary man. The changing of the War Cabinet into the Imperial War Cabinet was more than a mere change of name. It enabled Mr Lloyd George to give himself and the nation the services of extra and unpaid Ministers, free for all sorts of impromptu duties, in the shape of distinguished Colonial leaders. In 1917 General Smuts took his place in this Cabinet. The South Africans' own peculiar part of the war was over. They had speedily secured German South-west Africa; and though the campaign in German East Africa had been longer—the German Commander there, Von Lettow-Vorbeck, proved to be a great leader at the Boers' elusive kind of warfare—it had, for all practical purposes, finished. General Smuts came to England with a reputation made up partly of memories of the Boer War, partly of his very efficient work in this war, and partly of what South Africans said of his straightness, his good sense, his quiet clear-headedness. He was soon believed to be exerting a great influence behind the scenes.

No one was very clear as to the functions of the post of Director of Information under the Prime Minister (Mr John Buchan was its first holder) which seemed to turn later into a kind of Department under Lord Beaverbrook. Nor was it quite clear what the Ministry of Reconstruction was to do when the Bill establishing it was passed in November. It fitted in, however, with the general faith that the country after the war was not going back to old haphazard ways; and it occupied itself in collecting a mass of information and studying a wide range of questions. Much more obviously satisfactory was the other new Ministry now set up—the Ministry of Air. In one way it made little change; the Air Board, housed mainly in the Hotel Cecil, had already proved itself a sound outcome of all the criticism of our

air policy, and there was little complaint now of our position in the air-fighting which was developing so astonishingly on the Western Front. But the creation of the Ministry put the whole subject on to the right level of importance. It led to one uncomfortable incident. Lord Cowdray was at the time head of the Air Board. He was left to discover from the publication of correspondence in the newspapers that the post of Air Minister had, without reference to him, been offered to Lord Northcliffe. Lord Northcliffe refused it, preferring to keep his newspapers free from any such limitation of action as his acceptance of a Ministry might have imposed ; his brother, Lord Rothermere, became the first Minister for Air.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WAR YEARS : PART IV

ONCE more, by imperceptible degrees yet very distinctly in the end, the nation's mood was changing. Through the latter part of 1917 the final phase of the war temper was creeping upon us. The war went on, work went on, discomforts went on; but some quality had faded out of it all. The endurance was not breaking, but it had gone numb. We had come to the time of setting our teeth.

There were serious reasons why we must do so. The first was that Russia was collapsing utterly. We could see now how fatuously we had at first responded to the news of the Revolution, how foolish it had been to suppose that any new regime could smoothly take the place of the old. For a few months it had been possible to believe that. A single figure, Kerensky, seemed to emerge, dominating the situation, keeping unity in the giant system, able to give orders. Then the truth began to appear, and we wondered how we could have expected anything else. The vast mass, once its tradition had gone, once it had stirred, was bound to disintegrate; and that it was doing through all the late summer. Armies were simply melting away, trudging off by whole divisions to board trains and go home. As yet we knew next to nothing of the names which were later to throw this first Revolution into the background—Lenin, Trotsky and the rest. We did not know that definite new purposes were shattering the nation. We saw what we thought only the inevitable crumbling of a people that had risen

blindly against its sufferings, and had not found its new direction. By the autumn, Russia, for all practical purposes, was out of the war ; by December an armistice had been concluded, and the Germans were freeing themselves at Brest-Litovsk, in the meetings with the Russian delegates, from any more need for large forces on that Front. Their troops must be pouring westward.

Before this collapse was quite complete there came what looked like the beginning of another. In October the Italian armies were caught by a surprise, long and carefully prepared in the recesses and concealed valleys of the mountain Front on the Upper Isonzo, and had crumpled terribly. It was the disaster of Caporetto, which cost them nearly 3000 guns and 250,000 men taken prisoner, and drove them back from all their victorious advances to defence of the Piave. This might well mean still more enemy troops liberated for the Western Front. Yet the French and British had to draw on their own armies to reinforce Italy, lest she too should be driven to an armistice.

On our own Front yet another year was to end leaving us much where it had begun, and that in spite of two big attacks. The capture of Messines Ridge in October, beginning with an enormous explosion of mines, which was said to have been heard in London, had had no great results after all ; the Ridge had not given the commanding position over the German lines which had been expected. That battle had been followed by the long effort of Passchendaele, which seemed to give us some ground only at the cost of a new front line, which was far worse to hold than the old one. Two exhausting battles, and of the other Allied Fronts one gone and the other most dangerously shaken. The looking ahead to the next year had a different tone this time ; it could not but be a sober reckoning of the weight that must be going to fall on the French and British Fronts.

A sober reckoning, but not nervous. The Front must hold, the finish must be fought. The man-power must be found; and, as far as the Government's statements went, it was going to be found. There was to be no more divided authority in this matter, and no more frittering of decision among local bodies. The Ministry of National Service, in its original form as a sort of civilian counterpart of the military directorship of recruiting, had not been a striking success. When Mr Neville Chamberlain resigned, the control of the whole man-power of the nation was unified, the Director of Recruiting, Sir Auckland Geddes, becoming Director of National Service. The Geddes brothers were just then reaching the high curve of their rather surprising appearance in our public affairs. Sir Eric Geddes, by way of a post in the Ministry of Munitions and then the Directorship of Military Transport, had become First Lord of the Admiralty in the summer of 1917. He, coming from a vigorous career in the railway world, was—and looked—one of the captains of industry for whom the country had been clamouring, to bring some business courage and imagination into the conduct of the war. Sir Auckland Geddes, coming from—and looking like—an academic career, which had taken him to the principalship of a Canadian university, was less immediately explicable, but he must be, it was supposed, another of Mr Lloyd George's happy discoveries.

At any rate he was energetic enough in his promises when, in December, he made his statement about man-power. That question had changed its nature. It was no longer a matter of how to find more men to draft into the army or into munitions. More men were not there to find. Man-power meant now getting everyone into the place where he was wanted; the end of the *embusqué* must come, wherever he was. This was what Sir Auckland Geddes promised. With the whole affair

under his single hand—conscription, medical inspection, exemption, indispensable occupation, and so on—he could start on the one course left to us now, a searching and continuous “comb-out.” He announced in the Commons that his Department was already card-indexing every man of the forces kept in England, and that the back areas in France would be combed too, as well as all the huge Departments at home. He had in mind returning men to civil work, especially on the land and for building aeroplanes, as well as putting every fit man into the fighting line; and, indeed, the two were bound to go together. There was vigour in the statement. There needed to be, for if man-power slipped through the comb there was nothing left.

That was one of the marked elements in this ultimate mood of the war. There was no untried effort to turn to, no new inspiration for our strength. The machine must do it now. It was fully made, we were all in its grip, from the smallest civilian job at home to the remotest and most forgotten “cushy job” in France. There was nothing now to be magnificently achieved; there was only a determined grinding along towards something that we must make ourselves reach. Determined it remained; the purpose somehow held; but it had grown, when tired men and women could stop to think about it, soulless and mechanical. Through months and months, as the scope and pressure and the unpredictable developments of the war revealed themselves, people had thought incessantly of the way to meet them, method, machinery. They had it now. The machine worked. And the life had gone out of it. The impulse was no strong, common flame any longer. It had become—what had it become? No one who asked that question now could quite answer it.

There lay, on both sides of the struggle, the insidious anxiety of the final phase. The only open recognition

of this by the Government was an energetic promotion of propaganda in enemy countries; the best way to counter any numbing of the war spirit at home was to suggest that weakening of purpose on the other side had reached a point at which it might be worked upon to produce collapse. So there were now areoplanes at the Front, dropping bundles of pamphlets instead of bombs into the German trenches (Mr Punch's title-page for 1918 depicted him so engaged); and flights of tiny, gay-coloured balloons were liberated, when the wind was favourable, to spread pamphlets all over the enemy's back areas. Another new Department came into being, the Directorship of Propaganda, which Lord Northcliffe did not refuse. However, there was another picture in the same issue of *Punch*, which implied very clearly that public opinion in the enemy countries was not the only thing to think about. It showed a British soldier and sailor appealing to the people at home to "stick it"; and we were hearing again an echo of a cry of the moment in France, "Que les civils tiennent."

Naturally the anxiety concerned itself most acutely with the civilian population. They were not under discipline, and there were so many ways—evasion of restrictions, slackening of effort, resignation of jobs, and open striking—in which failure of the war-feeling might take form. This accounts for the peculiarly heated resentment provoked by the Lansdowne peace letter. Lord Lansdowne wrote to *The Daily Telegraph* at the end of November a letter suggesting that the time had come to make efforts for a peace by negotiation. That was one way of recognising the chance of playing upon German feeling. But it was the last way desired by the British leaders. Mr Lloyd George at once replied that there was "no half-way house between defeat and victory," and denounced as a public danger anyone who thought there was. "Defeatism" had become the

bogy of public men, and Lord Lansdowne suffered for it. Distinguished as his career had been in foreign affairs, he had always been remote from the ordinary man, and it was only too easy now to hustle his proposals out of sight. He never took a prominent place in the national life again ; this brave and serious gesture was the last act of a long and faithful service to the State.

With regard to the armies, anxiety had not to be so watchful and persistent. They were under discipline and the rigid military law. There was only one way in which a weakening of resolve could show among them ; and only then if it were disastrously widespread and deep. Yet the mind of the armies too had changed, and the authorities knew it. Indeed, it is probably true that the armies, always living under the machine in an entirely different way from the civilian, had felt before the civilians the creeping in of that numbing mechanicalness. In part it was due to the very excellence of all the military arrangements now. Here also the whole thing *worked* about as smoothly as it could. From the depots and training camps and officer cadet corps at home, out to the big Base camps of Le Havre or Étaples, along the whole gradation of the lines of communication, through rest camps, detail camps, army and corps schools of drill, gunnery, bombing, gas, through the belt of corps and divisional headquarters, up to the rest billets, the forward area and the line the machine worked. Not only that, but the High Command had seen to it that it worked to give the soldier all the health and comfort, all the casual amusement and distraction that was possible. From the dirt and "minor horrors," as they were called, of the trenches troops went back to divisional baths, ingeniously installed in ruinous chateaux and sugar factories, and got a complete change of underclothes, instead of retiring to draughty rest billets to hunt lice. Expeditionary Force canteens supplemented



generously the old Y.M.C.A. huts. Pay had been improved and men had money to spend in estaminets. Concert-parties were encouraged among the men themselves (and how good they were, with all the talent that had so unexpectedly found itself in uniform !), and concert and theatrical parties from England were always at the Base camps and were taken into the rest-billet areas. Night and day, in every weather, tearing along the back-area roads and steeplechasing wildly through the forward areas, the despatch riders shuttled to and fro in an incessant racket of open exhausts, knitting closer the whole enormous fabric.

It worked, through every careful gradation ; and there lay its danger. One of the civilian soldiers of those days, looking back afterwards to the change of mood in 1917, has said that what happened seemed to be that, whereas earlier they had felt they were fighting *for* something, fighting too *against* something, they now felt that they were merely fighting.<sup>1</sup> The mechanism was so good, its construction had taken so much pains and energy and attention, that men were beginning to wonder whether anybody in authority was still asking himself what it was all for, whether it ever would occur to anybody to stop it. As long as there was strain and awkwardness in the management and the life generally of these vast armies, there might remain the saving sense of temporariness, of effort for an emergency. But now that the war world was so completely a world, might it not take on a dreadful kind of permanence ? This was, in its way, the same as the civilian feeling ; we were grinding along in a hazy sense that there was something we must do, and no one pulling up for a minute to examine with anything like a free mind *what* we

<sup>1</sup> Mr R. H. Mottram, in *Ten Years After*. This seems to have been true of both sides. Much the same kind of feeling is discernible in, for instance, *The Case of Sergeant Grischka*, by Arnold Zweig.

thought we must do. True, it was only at a later date that the feeling could be put as reflectively as that; at the time it was much more vague. But it was there, and the concern about war-weariness in the army and the *moral* of the troops is the proof of it.

It might even be put in a rather paradoxical way; the fighting armies were wondering if they were not a bit too good at their job. They did it so well that they had become the kind of instrument which the authorities could use confidently. And they began to feel simply like an instrument, and to wonder about the people who handled them. For the fighting armies had become entirely new, a made thing, very efficient. One of the strongest impressions of that time is that their job was both entirely new and yet also thoroughly practised and accustomed. They learned little but the new warfare now: the minimum of drill, more for discipline and a habit of unity in action than for anything else; for the rest, gas drills, bombing and bayonet-fighting, sniping and machine-gunning, the technique of trench raids, and craft in keeping alive, made up their training. Their ranks were new; very few now of the old army survived among them, even in the old army battalions, except as those king-pins of the military unit, regimental and battery sergeant-majors, and company sergeant-majors. Their officers were new, except, again, for some regimental and a few battalion commanders. The ranks and the officers' messes alike were making their own traditions. The days were gone when the first sprinkling of the new officers into the old messes, with their particular code of conduct, had produced its crop of jokes about "temporary gentlemen." The phrase might still be heard. An officer of the old army, coming carefully groomed from corps or divisional headquarters, or from even more august regions, might think in that way of the groups in dug-outs, where stockbrokers,

schoolmasters, city clerks, undergraduates and promoted sergeant-majors made up what would be unrecognisable to him as an officers' mess. Pernickety A.P.M.'s at the Base, or embarkation officers at Boulogne, might be exasperated by the sight of captains and lieutenants in worn khaki, shapeless caps and high boots out of ordnance stores, looking, with their packs and haversacks and muddy trench-coats, far more like the men they commanded than like the old idea of men in command. The fighting officers did not mind. They drew together in their own little groups on the leave-boats or in cafés, for they had their own pride and a new tradition which they were certainly not afraid, if need were, to set confidently beside the tradition that now lived on mainly in the Staff.

Here, too, lay an insidious danger. They knew their job, these men of the new army. But what if they began to question whether those who kept them at it really knew what they were doing, or had any policy that mattered now? They could fight, and fight well; but that had made them very open-eyed. Small wonder if the interminable mud-choked struggle of Passchendaele made the armies begin to ask themselves whether the masters of the machine had any clear ideas. Hanging on to the edges of craters captured and recaptured over and over again, slipping into shell-holes to drown, sucked down, wounded, into liquid mud, bombing and machine-gunning along a line that was a mere spasmodic string of holes, always changing shape under the shelling—small wonder if men began to be aware of a suspicion that the war was turning into an immense futility. Yet the deepest futility of all, curiously enough, rooted itself in the feeling that the whole thing was unescapable; it must go on. Whatever the soldiers might think, they had not the slightest intention of letting the country down.

So it is in recalling these last two years of the war that one catches sight, dimly, perhaps, of what full-grown heroism is like. Round those armies hung none of the panoplied glamour of the "Old Contemptibles," lit by the great tradition of Waterloo, Lucknow, Kandahar. They were simply the new civilian armies. From them had even departed the romantic gleam of "the First Hundred Thousand." They were serving under no beguiling illusion of glory or lofty sacrifice. Soldiers would not swallow any longer the kind of thing that had sent men gaily to war in 1914. They had their own opinion of the ruthless war views of elderly patriots, and devoted suppliers of war material, and administrative indispensables, so safe and so voluble at home. That opinion was not often expressed, but it found words occasionally, as in Mr Siegfried Sassoon's poems; and action occasionally, as when in the spring of 1918 the troops at Étaples broke out in anger against the complacent newspapers, which shrieked about the dropping of bombs there upon hospital huts, and had nothing to say of the gross stupidity of imperilling wounded men and nurses by placing big hospitals alongside a notoriously large Base camp for combatants. Expression of these kinds might be rare, but the disillusion behind them was universal. And yet these fighting men, with no belief in politicians jostling one another obscurely in and out of office, or in the cheap stuff which passed for public opinion, stuck grimly to their faith in one another and in something that must be their country behind all the tawdry "patriotism." That is why one can see, in the time when no one talked of heroes, what heroism, not impulsive and bedecked and dazzled, is like. Those huge numbers of men, each with a quiet, peaceable place in life at home which he had had to leave, went to and fro to the fighting line with very little delusion about their chances of ever getting back.

Night after night they were marching up to the trenches, transport drivers and despatch riders were starting along the shell-blasted roads, gunners crouching under camouflages, quite sure that sooner or later "their number would be up." No romantic nonsense about war was left; only a racking familiarity with the morning and evening "stand to," the periodical "strafes" and "hates" of the artillery (we had not given up that kind of ironical war vocabulary), wiring, the sudden murderous infernos of trench raids, and death, ugly and revolting. They faced death as no armies in the world had ever faced it. And instead of heroics they sang:

" Oh, my, I don't want to die,  
I want to go home."

At home those who waited had to reach in some way the same sort of heroism grown out of romantic trappings. It had long ceased to be something fine and distinguishing to have one's man or one's sons at the war. That was the common lot, its dead-weight of apprehension a mere flat monotony now.

Towards the end of 1917 a fresh breath of interest blew through the war news. General Allenby, taking command in Egypt, had turned the situation there from a defence of the canal into a new attack on the Turks, and had moved across the deserts into Palestine. There was one strange and interesting feature of this campaign. The soldiers' letters home, which had had so little to say of places, however wonderful in their way, that struck no chord in their minds, like the classic spots of the *Ægean* or the Nile, suddenly sprang into vividness when they wrote of places in Palestine. Whatever might be said of the emptiness of churches and the failing hold of Christianity, the Bible story now proved to be so deep in the ordinary English mind that, as the army moved among the Bible place-names—Beersheba, Gaza, Jaffa,

the Dead Sea, the Jordan—the soldiers wrote almost as if they were in some sense at home. It was with a naïve kind of surprise and affection that they came close to the most sacred spots, Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem itself. Even at this late and disillusioned stage of the war, when no one could think much of the Christianity of Europe, there was a rather anxious pause as Jerusalem was approached. Would that city, of all cities, have to be blown to pieces, and filled with blood and death? The news that this had not happened was received with real relief. But it was the religious feeling of the Turks, rather than of the Christians, that saved Jerusalem; when on 8th December Allenby had it obviously at his mercy, it was peacefully surrendered. The British occupied it on 11th December.

Interesting it was, but it was all remote, and retreating Turks could make little difference. There was only one real area of the war now. Just as in the winter of 1915 our first concentrated ideas had opened out, and we began to see the war as a vast embattled ring all round Europe, so now ideas narrowed again, and we could see it pressing only more and more intensely upon us. This was not merely a vague feeling; it was becoming a daily experience in the December of 1917 and the January of 1918, with a sudden sharpening of difficulty in getting food. To be a registered customer no longer meant that one was sure of supplies. Queues had grown again for butter, margarine and tea; and then, just as they began to grow for meat and bacon, they were rather startlingly stopped by a complete and visible emptiness of the butchers' shops. There was always miscellaneous stuff in a grocer's shop, so that shortage of a few things did not necessarily discourage queues. But shortage of meat left nothing in a butcher's shop to make a queue for, and in January butchers quite frequently did not open at all. The big wholesale meat markets were also

visibly empty. Rationing at last had to come. It began with a General Order that registered customers were to be entitled to no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of butter,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of tea, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of sugar per head per week ; this was not as yet enforced by ration cards. Next came a new Order about meals in restaurants. Two days a week, Wednesday and Friday, were to be meatless ; no meat on any day was to be served at breakfast ; no milk to be served as a beverage except to children ; the quantity of bread or cake at tea was cut down to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. ; and customers were not to be provided with any sugar. People had to carry their own little packet of sugar about with them (they had long done this when paying calls), or the phials of saccharine tablets that now became so familiar. The meat ration of the army was reduced for all units mainly engaged in office and depot work ; and it began to dawn upon the public that, as the soldiers were now far more secure in food supplies than the civilians, common sense had better replace enthusiasm in canteens, and make a less lavish provision of food in them. Before January was out, compulsory rationing of meat, on a card system, was announced. The cards were being issued to every household early in February and became operative on 25th February.

They gave the conscientious housewife some distracted thinking to do, but the newspapers set to work to help her by simplifying the phraseology of official regulations, and giving specimen lists of purchases to show how the system worked. Every section of a card entitled to so much meat-stuff ; but it might be so much money value of butcher's meat, or so much weight of poultry or game, or cooked or canned or potted meat. The planning of a week's supplies became a complicated problem of fitting together joints with bones, chicken without feathers, rabbits without skins, sausages with them, and occasional long shots at improbable things like venison. The

popular restaurants rose to the occasion at once, with meals devised to cost exactly a coupon or two; busy waitresses' duties had to be simple, and people out to lunch from business needed simplicity too, in order to know exactly how many of their coupons they would have to subtract each week from the household pool. The great hotels and expensive restaurants involved their customers—or, at any rate, their waiters—in more intricate coupon performances at the end of a meal.

People were good-humoured about it, and the Government were careful to say cheering things at the same time. They were announcing in January that the submarine menace was now "held"; there was not the least need for alarm, only for care and system. New construction of ships was overtaking the losses, and new ways of warfare were tackling the submarines. There was, in fact, little real alarm, for there had been for some months rumours of what was going on. We had heard talk of improvised shipyards doing marvellous things in rapid construction, and even of concrete ships, swift and simple to build; we had heard, too, of hydrophone "listeners," which located submarines, depth-charges which crumpled and buckled and holed them, and then, more thrillingly, of the mystery ships which, looking like tramp steamers and full of navy men playing at being rag-tag crews, let themselves be torpedoed on the heroic chance that the submarine would be tempted up to the surface in time for their concealed guns to destroy her before they went down themselves.

Thus for the last eighteen months of the struggle sea-fighting, like everything else, as it seemed, in this war, went in unexpected ways, and stimulated heroism which no one had foreseen. The glamour was not, after all, to spread at its brightest over those immense battleships and swift battle-cruisers, with the long guns nosing out at their sinister turrets, which had been so great a



pride, as year by year before the war they took the water. True, the real effect of the battle of Jutland had by now emerged more distinctly. Dubious as the results may have been on paper, the German main fleet had never come out again; and the thought of our own fleet away in the misty remoteness of Scapa Flow gathered once more associations of power and mastery. But just as modern war on land had turned from the old spectacular clash of great moving armies into the tireless, watchful activities of trench-fighting and "pushes," so the sea war passed from the big fleets to the submarines and the destroyer flotillas, to the mine-sweepers and the motor-launch patrols. The old navy had become, as the old army had, the highly trained professional core of the fighting, radiating out like the main threads of a spider's web through a vast network of civilian service; and at sea, as on land, the war had become a tangled conflict of impromptu ingenuities and inventiveness, cold courage at insignificant jobs, and relentless endurance. People never knew as much of the sea service as they knew of the land-fighting; there were not the millions engaged in it to make it so familiar. But they heard something of the yachtsmen and amateurs who largely made up the motor-boat patrols; of the plain and homely tugs and steam-trawlers which went about the perilous business of mine-sweeping as simply as they had gone about their old affairs; of the crews of the lesser mercantile marine and tramp steamers, whose hard and dangerous lives, always close enough to death, had been made even more deadly. The shock of the battle of Jutland had been gradually lost in the sense that even in the strange ways of this strange war we were still the island nation, at home upon the sea, and its born masters.

Air raids were beginning to be defeated too. They were constant throughout this winter on moonlight

nights. A fresh kind of outcry about aliens arose from these raids. Those possessed of money—"Jews" was the common description of them—were said to be moving out of London, and swarming, the richer ones to Maidenhead and other up-river places, the rest into Slough and its neighbourhood; about the latter there was particular indignation, because one of the big Government depots of war material was known to be growing up there, and workers at it were being crowded out by these fugitives from London. Aliens of the poor class were accused of being responsible for the real panics that raids now brought in the crowded quarters of East London and south of the river, and for the wild rushes to the overcrowded tubes. Raids had indeed become far more terrifying experiences, not only in the casualties inflicted (death-rolls of forty or fifty, with eighty or a hundred injured, were frequent), but also in their nerve-shattering noise. The alarm was now given by heavy explosions of maroons, and London had by this time such a force of anti-aircraft batteries that the succeeding hour or two became one continuous appalling uproar, punctuated with the splitting crash of bombs. But at least the uproar did mean defence; raiders were at last finding it occasionally impossible to attack London itself, and had to turn back and drop their bombs elsewhere. All this made more rumours of new devices, and mysterious headquarters in London, where sound-observations of approaching planes were worked out, and the line of the raid watched till the time came for orders to be telephoned to searchlight stations and batteries and gun-carrying lorries.

At this stage of the war it was only from time to time that the country paid any attention to politics. In general it was inclined to think that Parliament might as well cease to meet, for it was apt to do harm. Attacks on Ministers were considered to be more likely to give

away secrets to the enemy (for they usually concerned some war event) than to help us. In December the House had gone into secret session again, the sixth occasion, because one of these attacks, by Mr Joseph King, was putting into words matter which had to be kept out of print. In January the Franchise Bill, with the vote for women, and the Education Bill, which, besides its general enriching of the educational system, abolished the "half-timer" and drastically restricted the employment of children, passed into law. But another of the long problems of politics was still unsettled—Ireland. The placing of the Home Rule Act on the Statute Book in September 1914 had been at the best little more than a gesture; feelings that had been on the verge of civil war in the July of that year had only gone into suspension when the greater war began. The rising of April 1916 had shown that even the gesture was useless; and at intervals there were bits of news in the papers which showed how fiery the embers of that rising still were, breaking out into flames of murderous attack here and there, especially in County Clare, where Mr de Valera had won a by-election for Sinn Fein. But people had not yet learned what those two words really meant, and Parliament had gone on busying itself in the belief that it could still deal with the Irish question. A Convention had been gathered in Ireland in 1917 to propose a scheme for Parliament to consider, in the hope, or the delusion, that this would be a way of getting Ireland to solve her own problems. Sinn Fein, however, had simply held aloof from it; and now, just as in the old days Mr Gladstone had had to suppress the Land League with one hand while offering Home Rule with the other, Mr Lloyd George was devising a scheme on the Convention's lines and trying to suppress Sinn Fein. We had not advanced at all; after all the hopes of recent years we were back in the old

impasse with only the names of things changed. It must have been in sorrow of heart that at this juncture, early in March, Mr John Redmond died. With tactics so different from Parnell's, a nature so different, liked by the House yet never beguiled by its liking, he had been as single-minded and as persistent as his predecessor in the leadership of the Irish party. He used opportunities differently, but he never missed or wasted them. He had seen a Home Rule Bill become an Act at last, only to become also a dead letter. He had led his party to that victory, only to feel Ireland slipping from him into far other hands.

A current of politics hardly observed at the time, but of no small significance, was the revision of the Independent Labour Party's constitution. In the autumn of 1917 membership of it—hitherto a group membership of trade unions and other societies—was made individual. What this meant, of course, was the passage of the party from the position of an industrial entity to the position of a national political party, from representing the wage-earner in his groups to representing a distinct and separate outlook upon politics in general, with which many were ready to associate themselves who had under the old rule no possible means of joining the party, because they could belong to no labour organisation. This was emphasised in the spring of 1918 by a change altering the party's professed purpose to that of furthering the interests of workers "by hand or brain." With these changes the further resolution could be taken to establish a Labour Party in every constituency. Instead of being merely a Parliamentary instrument for the industrial vote, and therefore not much seen outside industrial areas, the party was now to take its place beside the two great traditional parties as in the widest sense a third alternative for the general voter. All this was thoroughly in the spirit of the British

Labour movement, politics instead of the class war, a vertical section of the nation instead of a horizontal one, a recognition that there were Conservative and Liberal wage-earners, so that it was a pity not to open the Labour Party to people of means who might be Socialists. The change would probably have come in any case; but here again was a development hastened by the war. The breaking down of some old barriers, the presence of Labour in the War Cabinet, the new sense of Labour in the national life, must all have worked to hasten the change.

Yet in some ways it was an unfortunate moment for such a move. A bid by the Labour Party to rank as a national party came rather ill at a time when their rank and file were constantly repudiating their leadership in industrial disputes, and were laying themselves open, by striking in war time, to the accusation that they were too incurably sectional in outlook ever to have a national appeal; they could not think nationally even in the direst need the nation had ever faced. Mr Henderson was warning the Government and Parliament in February that "at no time during the war had the industrial situation been so bad." The new "comb-out" was reviving the double resentment against conscription and dilution; skilled men were threatening a huge strike if the comb were not so directed that dilution labour was taken first. Besides, wage-earners of all kinds resented the beginnings of rationing. They felt more than other people the puzzles of trying to arrange the weekly budget; they suspected that distribution of supplies was, as their men had taught them about so much in the army, a matter of "wangling," and that the shops in their own streets came off badly in comparison with the rich folk's shopping quarters; and they remained convinced, to the end of the war and beyond it, that the whole pressure was more due to profiteering than to any

real shortage of food-stuffs. The new restrictions in mid-March—the closing of all places of entertainment at 10.30 P.M. for the saving of fuel in heating and light, and the prohibition of any cooking in restaurants between 9.30 P.M. and 5 A.M. the next morning—did not perhaps affect the wage-earners very much, but they were suffering from what had caused the new restrictions—difficulties in the supply of coal—and anyhow restrictions in general were becoming an increasing exasperation to them. They felt badgered and put about, and senselessly caught in the machine.

Suddenly upon all the uneasiness at home fell the thunderclap of the March disaster. There had been from the latter part of February statements now and then in the papers about information of a coming German Offensive, gathered from prisoners. Everyone had known in a vague way that the collapse of Russia must mean a concentration of German forces in the West for a desperate struggle there. Mr Lloyd George, on the first receipt of the news, was taking the line in Parliament that it had all been allowed for, and that the British retreat was a foreseen necessity; but the newspapers did not look like that. They looked as if we had been caught very badly by surprise, and there was a wild outcry for a scapegoat. On 21st March, in the blind thickness of a densely misty morning, masses of troops had flung themselves startlingly, without any artillery preparation to give warning, on the Fifth Army, and the Front had given way completely. Someone must suffer for that, and the Army Commander, General Sir Hubert Gough, was relieved of his command. All the scattered feeling that not the nation itself, but the way in which it was being handled, was our weakness concentrated upon him and his staff. The men had been heroic enough; they had fought desperately; every available man, down to the cooks and the transport

and the labour companies, had rallied to the shock and held up the rush wherever for a little while it was possible to stand firm. The frightful failure lay in the complete surprise, and that came back to the Staff. The anger rose with the violent tension of anxiety for the next ten days. The Front had broken as no Front had broken yet in the West. This was no short costly effort. Along something like fifty miles, from the Scarpe to the Oise, our line had gone, and day after day it gave ground more. By the 24th we were back to the Somme, and the thrusting German salient on the maps went stretching forward still. The papers were urgent against panic; those that had most vented the bitter outcry at first steadied themselves down to telling the country that this was the crisis bound to come, the last effort, the supreme moment for holding on; it was the winning or losing of the war.

And well it might be, as the effect of the thrust grew daily clearer. The enemy was coming appallingly close to Amiens, and if he reached that, he could cut the French and British apart, and utterly disorganise the whole of the vital railway communications to the line. Albert was lost; the enemy got Montdidier, and Amiens was within gun-range. But by then hope had begun to glimmer again. The rush was slackening; the line was beginning to hold. By 1st April the news was definite that the German Advance was stemmed, and by 3rd April the intensity of battle was dying down. In the pause that followed, the Prime Minister made an announcement which strengthened enormously the great sense of relief. In the future the Allied armies were to be in one single command; Marshal Foch was to be supreme. Sir Douglas Haig, generously effacing himself, had agreed. It was a piece of good sense that comforted nearly everybody. There had been attempts in 1917 to bring about unity through an Allied War Council at

Versailles ; but no one had been much interested in it, or in the complicated incidents in February 1918 which led to the resignation of Sir William Robertson and the appointment of Sir Henry Wilson as Chief of the Imperial General Staff. There had been controversy about this in Parliament, but it had only wearied people with the sense that all this personal quarrelling was not getting on with war. The single command pleased them, not simply as a strategic soundness, but as a kind of promise that there would be less of all this half-political wrangling mixed up with the job of war.

The pause of relief was very short. There was just time to take in the pressing appeals to the munition workers to make good the heavy losses of material, and give up their Easter holidays ; to hear how the King had hurried over to France for his armies to see him at the crisis ; to read of the amazing things that the airmen (they became the Royal Air Force early in March) did nowadays, swooping low to pour bombs and machine-gun bullets upon trenches, and transport and moving batteries. There had just been time, too, to introduce on 5th April a new Man-Power Bill, putting the age for conscription up to 50, and providing for drastic withdrawal of exemption from young men, when, on 9th April, another piece of the Front broke. Again on a thick misty morning, and again without preliminary bombardment, the Germans attacked just south of Ypres, where some Portuguese troops were in the line, drove in a salient of three and a half miles, and started to soak Armentières and Bailleul with gas-shelling till they had to be evacuated. Fighting had begun again, too, in front of Amiens. "The sternest and most critical hour of the war," as *The Times* called it, was going to be a terribly long one. The rush in the north was never so sweeping as the first had been ; but it was every bit as alarming, for it showed how tremendous the German



bid for victory was going to be. Haig's message was the grimmest truth: "There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man; there must be no retirement." It was longer now before the news was allowed to be reassuring. The Messines Ridge, won so few months before, was lost again by 16th April, and a terrific fight began for Mont Kemmel. Gas-soaked, like the ruined towns, the small heights round Ypres were growing more and more difficult to hold; and we were soon back in the fears of the early days of the war, and "the fight for Calais." But it was a stern fight, and the single command showed itself now in the bringing up of fresh divisions from the French reserves to take over the struggle for Kemmel.

This was still going on when, with the abruptness with which all big war news, good or bad, was wont to come, the St George's Day raid by the navy on Zeebrugge rang out gallantly. To dash the Germans' last hopes of their submarine campaign while they were pouring men into their immense effort on land was good; and as far as we could know it had been done. Though a shift of wind had rather spoiled the smoke-screen, the concrete-filled ships which had been meant to block the submarine harbour, if not sunk quite in the right spot, seemed at least to have made the use of the harbour almost impossibly awkward. Anyhow, the story was a great one, the swoop of the fighting ships, the reckless laying of the *Vindictive* alongside the mole, the sailors leaping ashore in the hand-to-hand way of an old-time boarding, the blowing-up of the connecting link between the mole and the pier, the flare-lit, gun-lit devilry and courage of the whole thing. It sufficed to carry us over the last few anxious days around Ypres, the final loss of Kemmel Hill on 26th April, the fear of the thrust coming right through; and on to the second

pause of relief when on 1st May the papers could announce the defeat of a heavy German attack towards Ypres itself, the stemming of the rush, and the new line holding firm.

During those days the most famous of Germany's fighting airmen was killed, Captain von Richthofen. His name was almost as well known in England as in Germany. For air-fighting had been taking a larger and larger place in the news, and it always kept a character of its own which marked it off from the rest of the war. One reason was that it had such fresh power to stir the imagination—the clash in the air of these swirling, diving, flashing things, droning like vicious wasps, swooping in a sudden silence, and bursting into a savage roar again, while the machine guns rattled spasmodically across the sky. It was so amazing, too, that in these three or four years men, who had so lately been so cautious in the air, took it now so casually that they could fling their machines right and left, sideways and upside down, with no more anxiety than a bird has. It all meant, of course, that the flying officers were specially chosen men, put through the most searching tests of body and nerves, out to take any and every risk. An aerodrome officers' mess was like no other in the army, for they hardly ever sat down in the evening as they had been in the morning, and there was a queer loneliness in the deaths they died. Most of all, air-fighting—perhaps because it alone in this vast impersonal war kept the glamour of personal combat—maintained a real chivalry. So we had known of von Richthofen, who added to skill and daring notable even among airmen a piratical touch by painting scarlet the machines of his squadron—"Richthofen's Circus," as our men called it. The air chivalry was strong when he was buried with full honours behind our lines, and the planes of both sides dropped wreaths upon his grave.

Attention was too strained in other directions to be concerned about the Budget, though this year the revenue was put at the astounding figure of £842,000,000. In one sense there could be by now no real comparison with pre-war Budgets : the value of money had so completely altered. Letter post at 1½d. and postcards at 1d. —two of the imposts of this year—were, in fact, no more than an adjustment of revenue figures to this new value. Income tax at 6s., spirit duty at 30s. a gallon and beer duty at 50s. a barrel represented certainly stiffish increases of taxation, but not the enormous increases that pre-war values would suggest. To those who could stop to think about it, finance was almost the greatest of the many staggering ways in which all prediction had gone wrong. It had been so conclusively proved before the war that the appalling cost and money destruction of a modern war simply could not go on for more than a few months. Pacifist writers had even convinced many people that, in face of an inevitable stalemate ending, war could not be worth any nation's while. Yet here we were, well into a fourth year of war, and the money was there. The ordinary public knew nothing but the plain fact that salaries and service pay and wages went on, aware only of queer prices and pressures that made them demand rises and bonuses. Economists knew more, but could not yet see effects clearly. Bankers were showing that there was something behind it all which warned them to remould the credit structure. In the latter part of 1917 and the early part of 1918 those banking amalgamations took place which have put the control of money and credit into the hands of "The Big Five." This policy was watched with some jealousy, though it was not until after the war that it came in for heavy criticism. The amalgamations were the natural application to the rather dimly apprehended new finance of a process which had long been going on. Steady

increase, alike in the quantity of money and in the banking habits of the people, had for many years before the war induced a stabilising of the system by continual absorption of the old private banks into great joint-stock concerns, and a "run" on a bank had become a thing relegated entirely to past days. The Mortiboys and Owendens and Doughtys of the early nineteenth century had been such familiar human personages in their communities that credit had meant their own individual circumstances and reputation, which panic could throw down. But it was next to impossible to have anxieties about the wealth of a great ramified joint-stock bank. Now, with a swift and violent expansion of currency, the manageability of which might well appear very doubtful, the credit structure had to be *made even more taut against possible strain, and put into* few enough hands to ensure co-operation and mutual understanding at a crisis. Criticism was on the same lines as that aroused by the earlier absorptions of local banks. The ill effect of these, inevitable, perhaps, but hard, had been that the old elasticity of credit to a local customèr was lost. A private banker would constantly take the risk of giving credit in a time of need on his own faith in his client; big centralised banks could do it only by uniform rules. On a much bigger scale the anxiety now was of the same kind; credit would become more and more a matter of bank policy, pure and simple, with the elimination of a competition between banks which had forced them to some courting at least of their customers' interests.

Another subject which, like the Budget, was obscured by the acute anxiety of the war news was the Government's scheme, based on the report of the Convention, for Ireland. All the labour and controversy of the years just before the war became sheer waste. The new proposals gave up the idea of a separate Ulster, meeting the

case of that province and the Southern Unionists partly by a retention of 42 Irish members at Westminster, partly by a guarantee of a minimum membership of at least 40 per cent. of the Irish House of Commons for the Unionists, made up of additional members for Ulster and nominated Unionist members for other parts of Ireland. Sir Edward Carson had resigned from the War Cabinet early in the year, to have his hands free.

The only aspect of the Irish situation which went into the mind of the country at large was that these proposals were accompanied by the question of extending conscription to Ireland. The Man-Power Bill introduced in all the anxiety of the German rushes raised the conscription age to 50, and made a clean cut of all exemptions for men under 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ , wherever they were—in Government Departments, in munition works, or on the land. An England so drained of men looked angrily across at an Ireland keeping her men to make murderous trouble. May of this year was to see the Lord-Lieutenant (General French had gone to that post) issuing proclamations about treasonable correspondence with Germany, and arresting and deporting Sinn Féiners just in time, it was said, to stop another armed rising, which de Valera was to have commanded. But even the hot-heads, who were blind enough to think that conscription might be as useful a weapon against disorder in Ireland as they thought it to be against strikes in England, could hardly suppose that to draft the rankest disaffection into the army could be very helpful. Those who pressed for conscription for Ireland did so mainly on the unconvincing ground that it was derogatory to her to suppose that she would wish to be kept apart from Great Britain's need. In the end the Government watered down their proposal to a provision that the new Bill *might* be extended to Ireland by Order in Council.

With the slackening of anxiety in May came some ugly reverberations of certain aspects of the first onset of anxiety in March. A scapegoat had been found them; now came assertions that that had been nothing but scapegoat-hunting of a wholly dishonourable kind, and that the real responsibility had by this means been conveniently pushed out of sight. Sir Frederick Maurice, a distinguished soldier who had been Director of Military Operations in the first two years of the war, wrote for *The Daily Chronicle* an article making the most serious accusations. The blame for the disaster to the Fifth Army lay, he said, at the door of the British representatives on the Allied War Council, who had agreed, against military advice, to take over from the French more of the line than we could properly hold, and had forced General Gough to thin out his Front beyond the point of safety. When the smash came, not only had no one of them had the honesty or courage to tell the truth, and share the burden, but they had even been guilty of deliberate misstatements in order to save themselves. The pity was that just at this time it was far too easy for the Prime Minister to evade this fine attempt to remedy a wrong. It followed soon upon the disputes about the Chief of the General Staff, and also upon another matter which raised the question of military officers using in public their professional knowledge to attack Ministers—the debate in the Commons on the resignation of Sir Hugh Trenchard, Chief of the Air Staff. It was easy, when Sir Frederick Maurice's charges came up in the Commons, to take advantage of the public's impatience with all these recriminations about the High Command, its irritated sense that the only thing to do was to get on with the war. The debate, manœuvred off into rambling attempts to decide between inquiring into the charges by Select Committee or by appointing for the purpose two of the judges, never

forced the Government to the point of a definite and honest reply.

The fright that the whole affair had given to Mr Lloyd George was to be made fully apparent at the end of the year, when the test of a candidate's fitness for official support in the General Election was the attitude he had taken in the Maurice debate. The only immediate action, however, was the placing of *Sir Frederick Maurice* on retired pay, for his breach of Army Regulations by putting a professional matter into the public Press. That was unworthy, for the whole subject of Army Regulations in this connection had been rendered absurd, since the salutary provision which prevents officers on the active list from sitting in Parliament had necessarily during the war become a dead letter. The consequence was that in the debate on *Sir Hugh Trenchard's* resignation an officer of the Air Force who was also a distinguished Member of Parliament—Lord Hugh Cecil—could, by a speech in the House, get matter into print which, conveyed in an article by an officer not a Member of Parliament, like *Sir Frederick Maurice*, could be made an excuse for retiring him.

In these ways, and by General Gough's loyal dignity, the *Fifth Army controversy* was only too easily shelved. The nation was, besides, deep in its immediate worries and the very real pinch of its food allowance. Mr Clynes became Food Controller in June, on the resignation of Lord Rhondda, who had worked to his utmost limit, and died at the beginning of July. Mr Clynes was optimistic in speeches about the passing of the submarine menace and better prospects. Actually there was a small increase of the meat ration in June, and there were more ample supplies of bacon from America. But these ameliorations were too slight to cure the growing fret and strain of the restrictions. It was not mere irritation. Lightly though we came off in comparison with German

civilians, health was by now suffering appreciably. Children were starved of sugar-stuffs, and even jam at this stage had far less than its proper quantity of sugar. The war bread was to large numbers of people most indigestible. Fats of all kinds were so meagrely allowed (a mechanised chemical warfare made vast demands for them) that practically none could be used in cooking, and what could be obtained for use in other ways was inadequate for health. Nor was the shortness of allowance the only trouble. Constantly it was impossible to obtain the due allowance, and in poor quarters queues had begun again to weary the housewives, and exasperate them often with disappointment in the end. People had begun here and there to learn how households could co-operate in the preparation of meals, so as to use food allowances to the best advantage; but enterprise and organisation of this sort were far too rare. For the most part, households struggled along individually with the war-cookery hints which the writers on such subjects in the Press produced with much flucney, if not much ingenuity. In the summer an effort was set on foot to help the poorer households over some of the discomforts of rationing. On the model of a public kitchen which had been wisely started in Poplar, national kitchens were opened—four more in London, and others in Leeds, Glasgow, Birmingham, Newcastle, Cardiff, Bristol, and other big towns. Using food-stuffs on the large scale they could prepare meals, in exchange for coupons, far more appetising and nourishing than a wage-earner's household could manage for itself.

The reason for Mr Clynes's anxious optimism was the old trouble, the fear of the temper of industrial workers, but he did little good. His reassurances about submarines only encouraged workers in their rooted belief that profiteering had most to do with their troubles. Food shortage was bad enough. But there were all the other



exasperations. Beer and spirits, heavily advanced in price by taxation and weakened in strength by the restriction of malt supplies, were "no good to anybody." Tobacco was not only dear but difficult to get; the authorities kept the army "issue" going fairly well (though often with brands of cigarettes that nobody had heard of before or ever heard of again), but only by depleting civilian supplies. Now even matches were often unobtainable. Nothing could persuade the workers that no one was making money out of all this. Railway travelling came under drastic restrictions in June. Coal was short, labour was short, rolling stock and locomotives were short, for quantities had been sent over to France, where familiar types of engines were to be seen "doing their bit," with huge white numbers on them; even stretches of permanent way were said to have been sent over. Yet people with high and easy wages, officers and men in the luxury of leave passes, would not listen to any appeals to travel less; nothing but severe restriction would avail. Thus a mass of minor vexations gathered, as it were, on the surface of the serious troubles, and the national temper grew irritable.

One outbreak of it was another clamour against enemy aliens. This seemed to be precipitated by some sensational articles in a weekly paper—the notorious *Black Book* articles—which, giving a war twist to the commonplace kind of attack on the vices of Society, asserted that certain forms of moral viciousness were to be associated with pro-German mentality. That was only the most flagrant piece of the outcry, which became very general. East End borough councils, especially that of Stepney, indignantly laid at the door of aliens the panics during air raids. The Royal Society passed a resolution for expelling enemy aliens from membership. The spy scare waked again in the Commons; and, though the Home Secretary revealed the truth that the dangerous

spies were quite as often neutrals as enemy aliens, a committee recommended that all enemy aliens without exception should be dealt with, the males over eighteen interned and the females deported. Mr Lloyd George helped the scare by saying that at every reverse of the Allies he received many anonymous letters from aliens crowing over England, and was reminded that enemy aliens were still in Government offices.

In the more serious ways temper began to snap again in July among munition workers. The incessant smothered friction about combing-out was worked upon by new regulations, limiting the number of skilled men that each firm might employ. The object was simply to see that each firm had its fair proportion of skilled men ; but it looked too much like combing out more skilled men for the army. Coventry began a strike, and it spread alarmingly to Birmingham, Manchester and Lincoln. This time not only the trade union leaders but the shop stewards themselves were thrown over. Just as the strike was threatening to spread to Leeds the Government announced that every worker absent from his work on a given day would be deemed to have placed himself voluntarily outside the exempted industries, and would be called up for the army. That was effective for the moment, and the strike collapsed.

- By that time rationing had become fully systematised at last. Every individual had now a ration-book, with leaves for meat, bacon, sugar, butter, margarine and lard. Spare leaves allowed for the rationing by local committees of tea, cheese and other articles which could be left to local discretion. Special books were issued for children, for growing boys, and for men on heavy manual labour, adjusting the rations to those cases. Coal consumption was, in a looser sense, rationed too, by the cutting down of retailers' supplies by 25 per cent.

By that time, too, the war news had grown strained

again. The badly bent lines in the Salient and opposite Amiens were holding ; but now the French were giving way to another desperate German rush on the Soissons and Aisne Front. It began on 27th May, and throughout June thrust itself steadily down towards Château Thierry. Yet there was not the same acuteness of anxiety as before. For one thing, this new thrust had not the obvious and immediate alarm of the threat to vital communications in the Amiens attack ; or of the renewed attempt on Ypres and Calais. Nor was it so swift ; it hesitated more, moved with more difficulty. But, above all, there was an unaccountable feeling in the air that Foch was just waiting for some chance the enemy might give him, a curious kind of conviction that he was far more sure of himself than the Germans knew, with more than they knew up his sleeve. Rumours flew about of his fresh unwearied divisions held on the leash ; and besides, the Americans were pouring in. Some had, in fact, been in action in the Salient during the April rush, General Pershing having agreed to their being brigaded with British troops, and our worn-out men had watched them going up in their clean uniforms and brand-new equipment. They had arrived in force since then, and in pleasant French places had been passing the weeks of that sunny summer, still under the flush of the pleased heroism which British and French troops had long grown out of. Mr Lloyd George announced in July that 305,000 Americans were already in France, and other large convoys on the way. So that it was not the unrelieved apprehension of the March and April days which watched the new attack. Side by side with the anxiety was this strangely prevalent confidence that Foch was on the verge of his stroke. The new German salient looked tempting for him, narrow and peaked, traplike. Would this be the chance for which he was waiting ? It was. Ludendorff made one

more effort, from 15th to 17th July. On 18th July Foch struck back. With the Germans' new tactics of no artillery preparation, the French counter-attacked on the Château Thierry salient, then the English on the Amiens Front. At last! Once again came a cry from France, the cry of triumph—"On les aura!"

But the ways of this war had gone too deep into the country's mind for any over-confidence. The newspapers had for three years past warned us against thinking largely of "breaking through," of crumpling up lines, and so on. They had kept rigidly to talk of "pushes" only. These great German efforts themselves, which had at first looked like breaking through after all, had petered out in the end to no more than pushes of an exceptional kind. Large as were the bulges they had made in our lines, the enemy had come to the familiar standstill, and turned more or less immobile again. So there were no extravagant hopes of Foch's counter-attack. It was doing well on both the French and the British Fronts; the bends in the line were being flattened out again. Germany would know now that she could not defeat the Allies. But in so far as the mind went further than that, it was only to think that this was a necessary readjustment of the lines while we waited for the final stage. It would put an end to anxiety about Amiens or Ypres or Calais, and stabilise the Front until the American armies could be thrown in, full force, in the spring.

There was certainly nothing of the complete change of temper and mood which any thought of victory now would have brought. There was no more fear that our Front might smash. But there was no sudden alert rousing of the mind such as would have come with any hint that this was the beginning of the end. Germany had given us such a sense of her power that we thought we should need a couple of million Americans for that.

People went on with their jobs, a little less wearily perhaps, a little more eager again for the war news in the papers—but that was all the difference. Tempers remained what they had been, ticklish and precarious, when no overwhelming pressure of war news was upon them; and the result in August and September was a disheartening epidemic of strikes. They began with the women employes of the bus and tram services demanding equal pay with the men and the same war bonus; women on the tube railways followed. Then the miners came out; and in the last days of August, queerest of all, the Metropolitan and City Police. War had done very odd things to us when we had to see the police, not in their familiar places keeping a strike procession orderly, but forming one themselves, to demand better pay, and marching in fours to that very Tower Hill where strikers had so often fought them. London was so astounded and amused that somehow it managed to run itself for a day. A certain number of Special Constables were on duty at crossings, regulating the traffic, not unsuccessfully, and good-humouredly greeted by the strikers on their march as blacklegs. It was altogether a good-humoured strike, but it was probably as well that it lasted only a day. The task of negotiating was given to General Smuts—a clever move, because on the one hand the strikers could meet him more amiably than they might have met the Departmental authorities, and on the other hand he could be more conciliatory than the usual authorities. He came quickly to a settlement, conceding with slight modifications the men's demands. All of these strikes were on the old troubles of high prices and profiteering, and the immediate demands were all for higher pay. The police were out also, as their strike opponents in old days had so often been, for recognition of their union. A police trade union—it was a topsy-turvy world. But for the time

being it was a world in which money was easier to come by than in the peace world. So when cotton operatives came out on 1st September, railwaymen a little later, shipwrights on the Clyde, and a number of smaller industries, the easy money cured most of the troubles. Anything to keep things going.

For those were deeply uneasy weeks. Nerves were all on edge. Among those who seemed, perhaps, to mind the strain of the war least—indeed even to find it something that ranged from a zestful excitement to a great opportunity—nerves were on edge with the perpetual swing from hard work to eager amusement, from scrubbing ward floors or trying for some record in fuse-caps to dinners and dances and cinemas and men. The mass of people at no spectacular job, but holding things together as best they could, were worn with the length of the strain, the dull incessant fear of the fatal War Office telegram, the slaughter or the shattered exhaustion of their men in the big retreats, and now with the conflict of mind which longed wearily to think the end might be coming, and yet obstinately refused to think so. Nerves were on edge, too, in all high places, with the fear that, in the very last lap, the nation's mind might uncontrollably relax, and the tension snap too soon. There was sharp disagreement among military authorities between those who felt strongly that the men's *morale* had come to need something to think of besides the interminable war, some looking forward, some thought of what they would do in civilian life again; those who would not go so far as that, but felt equally strongly that it would be insane, with this army of 5,000,000 in being, to make no plans for its demobilisation, no classifying of men for their return to civil life; and those who were dead against anything and everything which might put into the soldier's head any ideas whatever except of going on fighting. Of the people at

home the authorities had not quite the same sort of fear. Munition workers might be restless, but the mass of them, drawing very large wages, would not be in a hurry to stop. Yet, with what was now known about the state of things inside Germany, who could tell when or how some "rot" might set in disastrously among civilians, some final refusal to endure any longer the waste and the blankness and the grinding slaughter?

Then, slowly, through all the disintegrating nerviness began to creep a kind of unity again. What was really happening was that the war news suddenly began to take on an arresting kind of continuity. It had for so long been either quite static, or a brief alternation of pushes and counter-attacks for a few days at a time. But now, half unconsciously, people became aware of *a new kind of persistence in the news; nerviness and strain lost themselves in a gradual turning away of the whole national mind from its own affairs at home.* These went on mechanically, but attention was no longer on them. It was on the other side. The great rousing of the mind was coming at last. In the third week of August the British advance had begun to be startling; and then at the end of the month came the news which really suggested for the first time a possible German collapse. All through the counter-attack, even when it was pressing forward most steadily, people had said carefully that we were only recovering the battered ground lost in the retreats; we had to reach the Hindenburg Line yet. On their old Front the Germans would stand fast again. The strength of that position, all the careful preparation of it long before, would make it still impregnable. We came to it—and in the last days of August the point which was reputed the most formidable, commanding the whole position, the Drocourt-Quéant switch, was carried by the Canadians; the great Hindenburg Line had gone. That did mean something;

not even the most wary could go on being wholly guarded in their expectations. After this anything might happen, even victory.

Life at home did not notably change. There was not the least slackening of the machinery, not a minute less of any kind of war work. The great thing now was not to give the slightest chance of a pause, to put in every ounce of effort. The push, glorious as it was, might not be beyond the possibility of dragging to a standstill again. In fact, what actually was operating at home was such a perfection of the organising of munitions that every kind of war supply was being produced on a scale to smother the enemy utterly in the spring. For a month more the balance hung. Mid-September brought the first completely American battle, the attack on the Saint-Mihiel salient which had jutted into the French line since the earliest days of the war, and now crumbled before the newcomers. Finally, on 28th September, the last piece of the line began to move. The British and Belgians attacked in the extreme north, and within the very first day Messines Ridge, fought over for a week earlier in the year, had been recaptured. Quite clearly the German power of resistance was past. The whole Allied line had caught fire now; the whole German line was yielding. From that moment even the most obstinate doubts broke down. German prisoners were being taken by tens of thousands a day, guns at the rate of a thousand a week. October was one long tale, almost monotonous but for all the individual anxieties, of advance and of capture of the places so long watched from our lines, then of the further unattainable places, Saint-Quentin, Cambrai and Le Cateau, Lille, Ostend, the whole Belgian coast. The collapse had come.

The England that watched it was not feeling high-spirited. It was, in any case, tired, rather underfed, even now incredulous. Besides, one of the gravest



influenza epidemics was sweeping the country. By the end of October the deaths in London alone were up to 750 a week. Services everywhere were devastated; police, fire brigades, telephone exchanges, the big hospitals, the huge Government Departments, were paralysed. The story of those last few days of the war is curiously different from the story of the days of its beginning. In spite of the news there was no strongly rising tide of excitement, nothing in the aspect of the streets to mark what was going on. In grey weather people went about their drearily familiar jobs, and home of an evening in the same pitch-dark streets, though not since the early summer had there been any air raids. Even the announcement that the Germans had asked for a safe-conduct for the discussion of terms of an armistice could hardly rouse the mind to much more than a numb recognition that the war was over. This request—the impregnable Germans, the Germans who had seemed to have every kind of command of war method that we had not, reserves that had never failed them, ruthless persistence—the Germans coming across with the white flag—surely that should have been a vivid, tense moment. It was not. Imagination could hardly whip itself up to picture those few figures, so enormously significant, somehow making their way through the huge welter of armies to come face to face with Foch and Haig. It could not grasp the amazing fact that somewhere on that colossal, impersonal battle-front a little personal path had opened through the rifle-fire and the shelling, to enable men to do what no one had done for more than four years—drive calmly from one side to the other. The end, like the beginning, was too immense to grasp.

Too immense, and also too unexpected and too sweepingly complete. The Armistice terms to the Germans were the terms of sheer defeat: the withdrawal of all

their forces ; the surrender to the Allies of the bridge-heads of Cologne, Coblenz and Mainz—of the Rhine, that is, their pride ; of 5000 guns, 30,000 machine guns and 2000 aeroplanes ; of all their submarines, 50 destroyers, 8 light cruisers, 6 battle-cruisers, and 10 battleships. And we now knew why. The whole German structure had suddenly smashed in revolution. The Kaiser had abdicated, and he and the Crown Prince had taken refuge in Holland. There had been, it was said, a mutiny at Kiel, when the naval command had tried to order the fleet out for one desperate fight before the end ; Soldiers' and Workmen's Committees, of the type which had made the Russian Revolution, were raising the red flag in Berlin, and all the big German cities, and working on the troops. It was too complete. We might have been fighting all these years to end Kaiserism and Prussianism, but it was staggering, bewildering, to see them crumple like this, the Kaiser and Crown Prince feebly giving in to the first breath of the storm (though there was bitterness ready enough to feel that this was just what they would do), the haughty and iron-willed High Command helpless, the mail and the eagle helmets a heap of tinsel. Too unexpected also in its way of happening. People had been thinking vaguely that the great drive forward of the armies must go on, Germany be invaded, Berlin reached. With success had come a return to old notions of war—the beaten country, the triumphal entry into the enemy's capital, the flags and drums, the steel and glitter of a conquering march past of fighting men. But the end had come with an abruptness as queer and as drably impromptu as almost everything in the war had been : armies in no particular array, pulled up to a standstill anywhere and everywhere, just stopped. A victorious end, with absolutely nothing to make the authentic blaze and thrill of victory.

And to its final minute the war was to keep its insane quality. The enemy had surrendered ; there were the Armistice terms, signed by the Germans, and everyone knowing that they were signed. Yet because of the enormous area of the fighting, because of the tremendous range orders had to cover, men must go on killing one another till a fixed hour—till 11 o'clock on the morning of 11th November. Actually, the end already reached, men were being killed the very last half-hour. Could anything have shown more clearly the crazy mechanicalness of it all ? Not even the knowledge that the terms had been signed disintegrated the Western fighting ; not even the knowledge that within a few hours they would be at peace with one another could make the opposing armies spontaneously give up killing. The machine fixed a limit ; till then they doggedly pounded along. No doubt something of the same sort acted upon civilian minds. Till the hour struck they could not leave their grooves.

This, at any rate, made Armistice Day stand out, as indeed it should have done, sharp and clear. In this alone the end was like the beginning. Though for three or four weeks it had been approaching, and for some days past had been certain, it came at last with a shock, suddenly. In London it was startling. The firing of the maroons which signalled the suspension of hostilities seemed to explode the whole of that enormous hive. Instantly from every building in every quarter people poured into the streets. It was like an extraordinary piece of symbolism, as if, coming out of the war, coming out of the long relentless pressure, they had to come out of everything, come out of wherever they happened to be, drop everything, forget everything except that they were alive and released. In every town, in all the big hut settlements where war needs had gathered people in crowds, the same instinct held : to crowd together.

In the country places, where even the Great War itself had brought no new-fangled signals and the church bells still did the duty they had done after Waterloo, men and women clustered by cottage gates and in little market-places. London, as the day wore on, grew wilder and wilder. Into the central streets, crowded in any case with the masses of people who had left every office empty, streamed the suburbs; and packed motor-buses, taxis ragged with people on the roof, private cars with their running-boards stormed by casual passengers, ploughed through solid rivers of humanity. The crowds had had the King and Queen out on the balcony of a window of the Palace in the middle of the morning, and fairly mobbed the Royal carriage driving along the Mall in the afternoon. They drifted to and fro hour after hour, increasing as the evening came. For the lights were on, and people, with that sense of coming out of everything, loved to give themselves the feeling of coming out of the dismal war-darkness too. Lighted shop windows and restaurants which could once more look gay were too good to miss. Till far into the night streets swarmed and were noisy. The mood lasted over the next day, when the King and Queen made a more formal drive through their capital.

But this kind of excited jubilation was not typical of the country as a whole. Indeed even in London, the place of crowds and shows, it was, after the first hour or two, shallow and forced in tone. The moment's impulse, on the stroke of the hour of release, to be out and to feel the sense of liberty rising in one glorious exhilaration, was genuine enough, and almost universal. But that was soon over; there was no great swelling burst of victorious pride which could sweep the nation into days of exuberant festivity. Relief was the one strong feeling, not triumph; and it was for the most part a dull relief, which wanted only to get away from

everything to do with the war, even from the ending of it.<sup>1</sup> Later on we heard how strangely the final hour had come upon the armies, the complete absence of any excitement at all, the bewilderment of the sudden cessation of every sound, the emptiness left by the abrupt stopping of everything they were there to do. People at home had not that strange drop into blankness; but after the first hour of excitement something of the same sort happened to them. There was no war on any longer; but what else was there? They were tired, listless, devitalised. And though the first night or two of peace had given, by contrast with the black nights of war time, an impression of light and gaiety, those winter weeks were really cold and dreary and dark. Coal supplies had fallen off badly; retailers had, at the best, only 75 per cent. of their normal supplies, and in fact had very often far less than that. Gas and electric-light companies were working on heavily curtailed stocks of fuel. In every way the tides of life were running too low for celebrations or rejoicings. British civilians had not suffered as German civilians had. But they had had their privations; and now crouching, underfed, over miserable fires in ill-lighted rooms, with a foggy dampness outside and influenza lowering their spirits, they could rise to little more than telling themselves that anyhow the war was over.

<sup>1</sup> It is curious and interesting to observe how very little the Armistice or the end of the war figures in the pages of *Punch* at this time.

## CHAPTER IX

### 1919 : DEMOBILISED

**O**FTEN enough since August 1914 Parliament had been accused of being out of contact with the real life and the real feelings of a nation at war. Its members appeared to be so inextricably bound in the old habits of politics that no crisis could shake them out of being politicians. Its debates were so preponderantly a useless, if not actually dangerous, raking over of controversial or unfortunate events that people asked themselves what good purpose at all its sessions were serving. The plea that in a war for the liberty of peoples representative institutions should least of all abdicate, that Parliamentary government must prove that it could meet this supreme ordeal of Western civilisation, was plausible.<sup>1</sup> But had it proved any such thing? It is true that, at the outset, not only had party strife been suspended, but in the formation of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee and the Food Prices Committee there were suggestions that Parliament might envisage for itself, as the rest of the country had to, a wholly new conception of its functions, achieve leadership in new directions, and embody the people at war. But it carried no further this early approach to the ways in which the Revolutionary Convention of 1793 in France had risen to the needs of "la patrie en danger," this tentative move towards something like the Committees of the Convention and the "représentants

<sup>1</sup> Mr Winston Churchill, for instance, advances this plea in *The World Crisis : the Aftermath*.

en mission." Parliament was soon back in the old ways, with debates, divisions, party prejudices, harrying of Ministers. People uprooted from all their old habits, absorbed in the exacting details of their new life in the army or elsewhere, saw with amazement that at Westminster alone nothing seemed to have changed. Parliament, instead of being in the front of the nation, foreseeing and controlling, was trailing behind, endlessly discussing decisions taken in fact over its head, and events it had done nothing to guide. Instead of riding the main current of the nation's life, it was anchored in a side-channel, stirred only by back-wash from the stream.

Now the House of Commons capped its poor record throughout the war with the most unpardonable failure of all. Its first thought at the end of the war was apparently for itself alone, and its own position in the new circumstances. Just when the nation was going to need very badly to keep its head, and Parliament should have been most free in its own mind to help, members gave their whole attention to themselves and their seats. A few days before the Armistice a document had been circulated among members, urging the maintenance of the Coalition Government in power. That had not been very eagerly signed; immediately after the Armistice, on 16th November, a large meeting of members was called at the Central Hall, Westminster, to listen to the Prime Minister, Mr Bonar Law and Mr Barnes on the need for giving to the Coalition, which had brought the war to a successful end, a fresh mandate for the transition to peace. Preparations for an immediate General Election were hurried forward on lines which, under the guise of being still patriotic abstention from party strife, were really something far lower. Five hundred candidates took the field with the express sanction of the Coalition leaders. Labour kept its hands free, and

entered the fray along its own lines. But any other candidate stood for election under most unfair imputations—he had not the blessing of Mr Lloyd George, so he must have hindered the war.

Such was “the Coupon Election.” In those critical weeks, with history under their hands, the nation’s leaders were wire-pulling. Excuses have been made for them. They were tired; they had been making enough history. Nor could they, or anyone perhaps, grasp at the moment the fact that, because everyone else was tired too, their vast war machine was going to run down to a stop as abruptly and as confusedly as the fighting. People were not going to wait to be arrayed in any particular posture for peace, any more than the armies had been arrayed for the cease-fire. They were going to turn away from the war just anyhow. Presumably the calculation of the statesmen was that, while they busied themselves about a new Parliament, the country would carry on without much change of mind. Then, with their refreshed authority from a General Election, they would begin to make the country’s peace-mind. This was a perfectly false calculation. Long before they had their fresh authority—even before they had fairly started to ask for it—the country had tumbled higgledy-piggledy into the shallowest kind of peace mentality; and instead of guiding and setting the tone, statesmen had to pick up what tone there was, and pretend it was theirs.

It can, of course, be argued that the tone was inevitable, that no effort of guidance could have made any difference. But it can also be said that, at the moment of the Armistice, and for a few days afterwards—only a few days, but that might have been long enough—the country was not, as a whole, in a bitter or revengeful frame of mind. There had been bitter elements throughout the war; there were very many whom their personal



griefs and losses had made only more bitter. But there were other elements in plenty. There were those who had never failed of the sense of the suffering on the other side as well, who found in the poems of Lady Margaret Sackville, for instance, the truest burden of the war. There were the masses and masses of simple people who, because they were simple and saw things in the plain terms of their own homes and not in large patriotic phrases, knew always in their inexpressive way that there were humble villages and mean streets and swarming working quarters in Germany as desolated as their own. There were the masses, again, who, however loosely warlike at the beginning, had learned from their men in the army to think of the enemy not as "the Hun" of the newspapers, but as "Jerry" and "Fritz," in the tolerant way of the soldiers. Was there not enough here to have responded to any touch of vision given at the right moment? For those few days the nation hung suspended. The war was over; it had no particular feeling one way or the other about the peace. Surely it might, with its cherished pride in being a nation of sportsmen, taking success like gentlemen, as well as defeat, have been swung into a quiet generous frame of mind. There would have been, of course, angry dissentients, clamorous for revenge and the uttermost farthing. But the broad popular mind, at any rate, might easily have been lifted into the calmer atmosphere which, to do them justice, statesmen on the whole wished for.

Too unsure of themselves to risk the great gesture, they let the chance go by. The vision was not given. It could not belong to election programmes. Parliament, in its hurry to think about itself, set the nation also upon thinking solely about itself. In its hurry to make promises it filled the air with expectations of what we could get, not what we could give, of the fruits of

victory, not of peace. As the poised balance of the first few days began to swing it came down heavily towards self-interest. The moment's chance of strength and generosity had vanished.

The result was seen only too plainly in the coarsening of tone during the next week or two. The Coalition manifesto, issued jointly by the Prime Minister and Mr Bonar Law on 22nd November, had, even if narrow and too immediately political in its outlook, a measure of gravity. It had little to say except about our own problems, but it was full of hope of the happier future before a country which had so tried its mettle, and before the returning soldier who had earned so much. "A land fit for heroes to live in" was the only right monument for the heroes who would live there no more. But the manifesto was followed by the hectic spate of platform speeches—the election was to be rushed through to send the political leaders to the Peace Conference, with the country behind them—and in the turgid banality of political meetings only the poor resentments and angers, not the dignity and patience, of war suffering found voice. Responsibility for the cruel devastation of these years, indemnities, our attitude for the future to enemy countries—these subjects needed discussion. But they could only deteriorate miserably in the slapdash generalities of an election campaign. On the eve of the poll Mr Lloyd George substituted for the manifesto a poor kind of hoarding poster, a coupon bid for a Coupon majority: Trial of the Kaiser; punishment of those responsible for atrocities; the fullest indemnities from Germany; Britain for the British, socially and industrially; rehabilitation for those broken in the war, and a happier country for all.

It carried the day. The new House of Commons, when the returns came in, numbered 478 Coalition members, 59 Labour members, and a mere scrap of Liberalism

which had refused to label itself with the precious coupons, 27 members. But in the very process of consolidating its position the Ministry took solidity out of everything else. They had let loose a vociferous haste, and in the rush of it the whole nation, civilian and military alike, slipped rapidly out of hand. All the careful plans for gradual and systematic demobilisation of war industry and the armies began to go wrong, and fell within a few weeks into the angry confusion of wholesale methods, which were the very thing the authorities had most wanted to avoid. Soldiers clamoured to go home, their people at home clamoured to have them back. Pre-war labour clamoured for a clean sweep of all dilution labour, and especially of the women who had taken men's jobs. Dilution labour and the women hotly resented this brushing aside of all they had done; and, now that women had votes, politicians did not find this phase of the difficulties easy to deal with. Ugliest of all, a great part of the labour world which had stayed comfortably at home all the time actually wanted to prevent the men who had gone from coming back; they were jealous and frightened about the flooding into the labour market of those millions of men.

Armistice feelings had evaporated pitifully. Discomforts and strains, which even while the war was on had not been patiently borne, grew more and more exasperating in those discouraging winter days. The papers were full of complaints of the still rising prices—eggs, for instance, were costing 9d. each. They were full also of complaints of the bullying manners of shopkeepers, taxi-drivers, bus and tube attendants, and so on—the implication being that these had so much enjoyed their dictatorial position under war emergencies and restrictions that they would not now give them up in peace time. The fault, in truth, was on both sides. People were in an obstinate hurry to have everything just as it used

to be, all their old ways back again, and those with whom they dealt in this impatient mood lost their tempers, or grew morose and discourteous. Moreover, most of these servants of the public had their own troubles in uneasiness about the keeping of their jobs, which would not help them to be genial under difficulties. Above all, few had yet grasped the fact that money, at least, was never going to be just as it used to be. The result was that prices not only terribly high, but actually still rising, with the war over, no submarines about, no more need for tonnage for munition material, roused acutely the conviction that a wicked amount of profiteering was going on. Every kind of payment, from the grocer's and butcher's bills to the taxi-driver's fare, was tainted with this suspicion. Efforts were even made, by wholly unauthorised local committees and a kind of boycotting, to force prices down.

London had its shows now and then to distract it and remind it that, after all, the war had been won. The Mall was lined from end to end with ranks of captured German guns, huge heavy artillery pieces, squat howitzers, field guns, long, thin anti-aircraft guns, with trench-mortars and machine guns filling the odd spaces. Men rambled curiously round the things that had once roared death at them; children climbed on the gunners' seats and worked every handle that was movable. On 1st December Clemenceau and Foch were in London, a visit mainly for preliminary business of the Peace, but a chance for the crowds to see them; and on 19th December Haig and the army commanders came home to cheering streets. Even they were hardly so fêted as was President Wilson, when he arrived on 26th December with Mrs Wilson. He was the man of the hour. Under him America had come into the war; upon his "Fourteen Points" the Germans had based their surrender; and he was coming now not merely to take his part in the making of the

Peace, but to impose the Covenant of the League of Nations. In all the fading of early idealism as the war dragged on, the loss of all the fine feelings of fighting for free peoples against international brutality, one ideal had survived—that this must be “the war to end war.” It might not always be idealistically expressed; it had in masses of men taken the plainer shape of saying to themselves: “We have got to finish this job—but never again.” Yet with peace revived the higher sense that the worst betrayal of the youth which had been slaughtered would be to leave in the world any chance that future generations of youth should have to face the same hell again. And for that, above all men, President Wilson stood now. He came from a land free of the age-old rivalries of Europe, from a land that could be sane and sensible. His coming, quite rightly, was not merely a London show. He went to pay a pious visit to Carlisle, the home of his forbears, and thus some of the big northern cities also had their chance to see him, tall and thin and austere, a typical figure for the hopes he represented.

One of the earlier visits of December—the arrival of the Emir Feisul—let loose a cloud of the most wildly romantic rumour, which gradually spread till the man at the heart of it became a popular hero, decked in all the story-book excitement for which grim modern war seemed to have no place. Bit by bit, from the people who had known about it, came the tale of a young Oxford don, who, in archæological work in the Near East before the war, had discovered his gift for getting on with Arabs, understanding them and their ways, able, as far as a European ever is able, to live their life in mind as well as in body. Colonel Lawrence was the most extraordinary of all the cases of quiet-seeming scholars who walked straight out of culture into war with the most brilliant success. Practically single-handed he had instigated and manipulated a revolt of Arabs against

the Turks, which had been of most material assistance in the later stages of Allenby's advance. He had known how to manage his headstrong and erratic levies and to use them in skirmishes and railway-cutting and transport-harrying. Under his hand a new kingdom had arisen; and the tale had all the right picturesque accompaniment of burnouses and camels, tents in the desert, and swooping, sudden raids handled by the mysterious white leader. Even what was known then, before he had written his book, was more exciting than any Kipling story of the lone Englishman turning into a chieftain of warrior nomads. Stimulus to the interest in Lawrence was given by his own profound dislike of notoriety. He would not be seen or interviewed, or lionised in any way at all. No one even seemed to know where he was. That put the finishing touch: he was not only the story-book Englishman come true; he was the silent, strong man as well.

The new year opened uncomfortably. In the armies six weeks of bored waiting, of dreary fatigues on clearing-up jobs, of useless and tedious formal drill, with which commanding officers tried to keep discipline, were producing discontent on the verge of mutiny. The hope that educational and technical classes, which might give the men a better chance when they returned to civil life, would interest them and keep them occupied while a calculated and classified demobilisation went on, had gone to pieces. A new branch at the War Office had come into being in the previous September to organise educational work among the troops. This work had been going on since the spring of 1918 as a method of keeping up *morale*, and through the later months of the war it had had some success. After the war the system was to become established, as a means of saving the army from what had always been one of its blemishes—the fact that it was a “dead-end” occupation for a man, giving him but limited prospects of employment at the

end of his service. But in this interval, as a steadying force during a gradual demobilisation, the idea failed. Men wanted only to be at home again, and wanted that intensely. Demobilisation bases in France grew more and more difficult to handle, even when they did not break out into actual disorder; in England too the early days of January brought riots in camps at Dover, Folkestone and Osterley, and angry demonstrations of troops outside the War Office. There was nothing to do but to scrap practically all the careful plans for returning men to civil life. They would not stand being classified for return according to the state of the labour market. For that meant seeing men go home after perhaps six months' service and no fighting, because their trades were not overstocked, while men with two or three years of fighting service were still kept back. The troops demanded one simple principle—demobilisation according to length of service and at the utmost speed at which the necessary documents could be issued. Belatedly the Government recognised how remote from human nature their neat paper plans had been. In a week or two demobilisation centres were working men off at the rate of 50,000 a day. Most of them would not wait for the standard civilian suits which the authorities offered, and trudged off just as they were; for a long time khaki, with the military buttons cut off, made a working dress for men in factories and in the fields. Even at this new pace of demobilisation the worst case of disorder in a camp was yet to come. Colonial troops had, in addition to other demobilisation difficulties, to await transport and their own governments' arrangements. They were delayed for too long, and in March Canadian troops at Kimmel Park mutinied. Five were killed and over twenty injured before order was restored; and a few days later there was a riot near an American Y.M.C.A. hut in London.

The new Ministry was announced on 10th January. It was still almost the swollen Ministry of war time. The Food Control and Shipping Control Departments naturally had to continue. But the Ministry of National Service was combined with the Ministry of Reconstruction under Sir Auckland Geddes; and the Ministry for Air, by a mistaken policy which subsequently had to be abandoned, was combined with the Secretaryship of State for War. The Ministry of Munitions survived under a more peaceful name as the Ministry of Supply. In this there was a hazy suggestion that we might carry on into peace some of the large-scale purchasing system and organisation of the war. But the real reason for the continuance of this Ministry was that the control had been too complete, and the mass of employed persons too vast, to permit of a sudden throw-back to normal conditions; the Ministry was necessary for softening the return to ordinary wage competition. In personnel the new Government was the old one, with a few changes of Department. Sir Eric Geddes became one of the Ministers without Portfolio; Mr Churchill went to the War Office (the scrapping of demobilisation plans fell to him); Sir F. E. Smith became Lord Chancellor and Lord Birkenhead. The only mild sensation was the appointment of Sir S. P. Sinha as Under-Secretary for India; he was the first native of India to become a member of a British Government, and was very soon the first native of India to take his seat in the House of Lords. His appointment served as a reminder that one of the Liberal policies interrupted by the war had been a further experiment in self-government for India, which was to take shape later in this year.

In January came also—but two months too late to have any healing generosity in it—concern for the starved condition of the defeated countries. In both of them the war collapse had been collapse into revolution.



The Austro-Hungarian Empire was not destroyed by the Peace Treaties: it ceased to exist at the moment of the cessation of hostilities. What left the battle area was not an Austro-Hungarian army, nor even Austro-Hungarian regiments; in the very process of going, those military shapes melted uncontrollably into new coalescences, and only racial groups of Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Croats, Magyars and Slovenes filled the home-bound trains. The young Emperor Karl of Austria had had to abdicate and leave his country, like the Kaiser. Both countries seemed likely to avoid the plight of Russia—the passing of a constitutional revolution into the hands of social revolutionaries: Germany was settling down into a bourgeois republic, Austria-Hungary into a number of nations which would find different forms of constitution. The Soldiers' and Workmen's Committees in Germany, which had looked at first like a reproduction there of the Soviet spirit, had not gained a hold on the sober German mind. Little more than an unhappy echo of a conflict already over was in the news now that Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, whose notoriously extremist opinions had made them leaders of the Spartacists (the name class-war fanatics in Germany gave themselves), had been killed in Berlin. Liebknecht was reported to have been shot while trying to escape after arrest, Rosa Luxemburg to have been shot by someone firing from an infuriated crowd.

Naturally, perhaps, as being the real end of the war—the disappearance from Europe of the Austrian Empire which had so long, and the German Empire which had so disturbingly, occupied their places on the map—these revolutions had been watched without much thought of the other conditions the war had produced in those countries. Still, there had been many concerned also for the effects of the long blockade. Here again, it seemed, the United States must do what we could not.

Relief in food supplies on an enormous scale was necessary, and a Mr Hoover emerged rather suddenly as the organising genius for the purpose. He was announcing in January that 1,500,000 tons of food-stuffs would be needed to pull mid-Europe through until the next harvest, and he was at work co-ordinating effort, securing transport, constructing the machinery for distribution. In an England still thinking of enemy countries the only public effort that could hope for success was an appeal to the sentiment for children, with the "Save the Children Fund."

The new House of Commons met, and a strange body the election returns had produced. The sensational fact was that, except for the Irish Unionists, hardly an Irish member was present. The old Nationalist seats had gone solidly to Sinn Feiners, and they, instead of coming to Westminster, were holding a Convention, a Republican Convention, in Dublin. But few understood at all how sinister this was; it was taken as a rather childish ill-natured gesture. Another thing dismissed as a gesture was the Labour Party's announcement that, in view of the virtual obliteration of independent Liberalism, they would regard themselves, and act, as the official Opposition. This was seizing the opportunity to put the seal on their recent moves towards becoming a third national party. To act as the official Opposition laid a claim to be regarded, not as a specialised group outside the normal play of politics, as the Irish Nationalists had been, but as a party which meant some day to be in office. Not that this appeared to most people anything more than a piece of pomposity; only in such a freak of a House could a group of 59 members give itself these airs.

There was deep irritation behind this criticism, for the industrial world was stormy and threatening. Political labour leaders who had to spend half their time trying

vainly to keep labour following them only gave an impression of impertinence when they pretended to office. It looked as if labour in the mass was growing less, and not more, political in purpose. "Direct action" was the catchword again, as it had begun to be just before the war, as it had not ceased to be—though the Press censorship had largely blindfolded the public—during the war; and it was a more threatening catchword now. For a good many people had been asking themselves nervously, for some time, what was going to be the effect of passing millions of men through the ghastly schooling of the war. How could they be expected to come back with the old restraints, the old values of human life, from years of familiarity with killing at close quarters? In actual crime far more murderous methods must be expected; and in strikes the violence which had been becoming more and more common might take a terrible new character. What of a strike in which half of the workmen and half of the police might have learned how to fight from house to house along a street, and clear out a strong-point with bombs? In fact such apprehensions proved to be baseless: the war left no widespread infection of brutality. But during these months direct action was a phrase with peculiarly alarming associations. Apart from this, labour demands were much more disturbing after four years in which over and over again workers had apparently only had to strike to get what they wanted. This was one more of the ways in which failure to grasp what the financing of the war had really involved was deplorable. The readiness with which advances of pay and bonus had been granted was partly, no doubt, especially in the later stages of the war, due to the urgent need of keeping things going; but it had also been due to the fact that, with money values changing so completely, the advances were largely a

mere adjustment to prices, and therefore proper. This, however, was not the way in which they appeared either to labour or to the rest of the community. Each side drew a false conclusion, embittering to any industrial dispute. People who were always ready to be impatient with strikes thought they had a far better case for indignation now, when wages generally were at a figure which, on paper and by pre-war standards, looked like sheer luxury for those who earned them; there were ironic stories about working-class wives buying things in provision shops which a middle-class wife had just decided she could not afford. The impression given to the mass of labour by its wage advances was no more reasonable. They had simply deduced that there was, as they had always suspected, far more money due to them than they had ever been able to get, until the war gave them their chance really to frighten a government. This lesson they proposed to carry over into peace time, and it was of little use for Mr Clynes to urge upon them lawfulness and political action, worse than useless for Mr Lloyd George to talk about "Prussianism in the industrial world." Another epidemic of strikes had broken out, among shipwrights and engineers, with rioting in Glasgow, among gas and electricity workers, with the threat to plunge London into darkness on a given night. Here was direct action, plainly enough. The Government made no terms with it. They still had the Defence of the Realm Act to strengthen their hands, and they announced that, if the threat were carried out, they would imprison every striker. That was enough to "postpone" this strike, and the others had been composed by the early days of February.

But a bigger difficulty loomed—the coal mines. Miners were determined to bring their grievances to a head, and to make the country face the circumstances of their industry, unlike any other staple industry in the squalor

of its housing, the danger and unnatural conditions of the work. They demanded a 30 per cent. advance in wages, a six-hour instead of an eight-hour day, and nationalisation of the mines. This last demand was based partly on the general principle that minerals should not be allowed to be private property, and partly on the practical view that many of the worst grievances in mining—inadequate equipment, fluctuations and discrepancies in wages, bad housing—had their roots in the private ownership of mines, encouraging a sluggishness in adopting new ideas and preventing a pooling of resources whereby the good mines might help to keep up wages in the less profitable ones. The demand for a shorter day, again, was based, first, on the general principle that the conditions inseparable from mining should be imposed only in short shifts, and secondly, on the practical view that shorter hours would mean the employment of many more men. This latter plea had particular force at the time when thousands of miners would be returning from the army, who could only very slowly go back into employment, and a great number of whom would probably never be reabsorbed at all. In the drain of men, workings had been closed which would take time to reopen, and the poorer ones might not be opened again. Hence the miners added to their demands, for the moment, the payment from State funds of full wages to all demobilised miners until they were reabsorbed.

The Government had to come to terms, and quickly. The necessities of the war had badly crippled coal production; it was an industry that neither women nor dilution labour could help. Now with the country needing every possible energy of production, and the fullest possible employment of industry, a check in coal supplies—which at best were very seriously below the normal—would be fatal. The Government offered an

immediate advance of a shilling a day on wages, and in proposing a Royal Commission to consider the more general demands they agreed to the insistence of the miners' leaders that its report must be prompt. After some discussion of dates it was laid upon the Commission, of which Mr Justice Sankey was appointed chairman, to report by 20th March. On these terms the miners' strike notices were postponed till 22nd March.

Other troubles of the Government did not smooth their path with labour. The pace of demobilisation which had been forced upon them had given them for a short time something like a panic that they might be left without an army at all. For the war army had been a "duration" army, save for such small remnant as might be left (and very little of that in the ranks) of men enlisted on the pre-war service terms. From having 5,000,000 soldiers they might even find themselves without the necessary number for the Army of Occupation. And they needed more than that. For we had forces still campaigning in Russia. During the last year of the war there had been too much to occupy our minds with France for anyone to pay much attention to the minor business of trying to help Russian leaders who had kept some troops together, and refused to accept the Bolshevik peace with Germany. It had been worth while to send reinforcements to them, for any chance, however slender, of keeping Germany from drawing at her ease on the grain resources of the Ukraine and other Russian districts, to escape the stranglehold of the blockade, was not to be missed. But this had involved supporting armies which in refusing to accept the Bolshevik peace refused also to accept the Bolshevik regime. That made every kind of trouble now. For the Government, feeling it dishonourable to leave these armies to face the Bolsheviks alone, the moment that we had no interests of our own to serve, were anxious to

keep in strength our forces at Murmansk and Archangel in the north, and along the Batum—Baku line in the south. Yet it could not be denied that, in the circumstances, a defensible piece of war policy had become political intervention in the internal affairs of another country, and controversy was only too ready to grow heated. Labour in its disaffected mood was fulminating against an attempt to crush a social revolution. But there were plenty of people thoroughly approving of the attempt. The Bolshevik Government not only refused to be responsible for debts of the Tsarist regime, or for trading or other concessions granted under it; they also announced that, not content with making a Communist State for themselves, they intended to force Communism on all other States. They thus roused, as well as the financiers and commercial men with interests in Russia which had become a dead loss, everyone who feared or mistrusted the growing power of labour and the increasing insistence of its demands. Indeed, the Bolsheviks justified the hostility to them; declaring war on the social order in all other States, they could not complain of intervention in their own. The result in Great Britain was that for months to come a lot of the smothered class-feeling flew about in angry talk of White and Red armies, Koltchak, Wrangel, Denikin, Lenin and Trotsky. Labour accused the Government of wasting money in a financiers' war; others accused labour of being so swollen with war wages that it was losing its head altogether.

There seemed to be any number of subjects to nag about, and any amount of readiness to nag. The peace mood was as queer and fretted as any of the war moods had been. It was made up of many currents. There were all the people who could not stand having any more difficult things to face or think about, and just wanted to be done with the abnormal. There were the de-

mobilised men wanting their jobs back, and the people who did not want to lose them. There were people in all sorts of businesses distended by war needs, in old Government Departments which had had to take on new functions, and in the huge new Departments. There was the outcry against all of these, the clamour for instant retrenchment, and vexed irritation at the undiminished swarm of "dug-outs" and clerks and typists hanging on to salaries they could never hope for in the competition of normal life. The too-familiar mood of contemptuous impatience with the Government was helped now by one of the strange results of the nation having been plunged so completely into the war. Everyone—the soldiers pre-eminently, but civilians hardly less—was coming back to his ordinary life with some degree of scorn for Government institutions. Millions who had never had any contact with Administration before had come immediately under it, or even become a part of it. With no conception of the complexity of a Department's work, or of the real need for much of the over-carefulness, which appeared mere fussy formality, they lumped together the mistakes and failures inseparable from the terrific strain of such a war on any Government, the makeshift quality of much that it had had to do, the stiffnesses of a great many people trying to cling to the proper authorised ways in the midst of a raging torrent of events, the real incompetence and unimaginativeness of a great many more, and decided that the war had been a frightful revelation of what Administration was, once you got inside it. And they came out of it with one universal feeling—that the war had been won not by Ministers and War Office generals, tail-coated permanent officials and red-tabbed colonels, who had been supposed to manage affairs, but by the ordinary man: by big business running munitions, by clerks and brokers and bank cashiers and schoolmasters



and lawyers and junior partners commanding companies and platoons, by the huge mass of commonplace folk who had filled the ranks. In its bitterer forms the feeling went so far as to suggest that we now knew what a "ramp" all the governing we had accepted before the war must have been; these superior people, with their supposed experience, were of far less use than the average man taken out of the competitive market. To all this was added the talk of the demobilised men, and their sense that the national job was done a lot better when it depended upon them than it was being done now.

So there was a self-assured and dictatorial tone in all the nagging of the Government. They must do something about industry and stop the extravagant unemployment dole. They must get prices down and remove that excuse for high wages. They must draw in their own tremendous expenditure, sell off surplus stores and their big improvised factories. They must set about removing rationing, restriction of hours of drinking, and other tedious survivals of the D.O.R.A. They must do something about the appalling lack of housing accommodation and not leave men who had done their bit jostling one another for lodgings—miserable enough when they could be got at all. And they must do all this quickly. A popular newspaper, whose cartoonist invented just now the two moss-grown complacent incapables labelled "Dilly" and "Dally," exactly hit the mood of the moment, and was never at a loss for some new field of muddle and waste in which to depict them displaying incompetence.

Irritation concentrated on the delay in the making of peace. Half of these worries, and all these lingerings of war expenditure and war typists and war motor-cars, were because we were not yet formally at peace. What were the people doing in Paris? The discussions there

were secret, but there was, of course, talk about the complexity of the decisions which had to be taken, the assessing of Germany's ability to satisfy the Allied demands, and the delimitation of the frontiers of new nationalities. "Self-determination" was a blessed word, but it did not draw plain lines on a map. However, excuses did not appease impatience. Had not the delegates taken to Paris experts enough to get on with this work? There they were, more of these enormous staffs of officials, clerks and typists, housed in great hotels, hanging on to the skirts of peace-making, as they had hung on to the skirts of war, and in no more of a hurry that it should be over. This particular irritability was shot through with suspicion that the delay must be due to some whittling down of peace terms. About these, passing months had brought no more plain sense. In the din of the General Election the profound difficulties of the question of indemnities had degenerated into "making Germany pay" and into Mr Lloyd George's "Search their pockets." He might have regretted that phrase since, and the fatal tendency to bid for the roar of a delighted audience which betrayed him into it. But he was not going to be let off. In the unpleasant surprise of prices going higher than ever, and life in general being so uncomfortable, the least suspicion that Germany was not going to pay through the nose, pay for everything, disgorge wealth to ease our pockets, roused an outcry.

Mr Lloyd George was leading a divided life, oscillating between Paris and the House of Commons. He had to keep in touch with the debates, for the House was busy with all the subjects about which the public was impatient. It was tackling the housing question along two lines: first, a Rent Restriction Bill, to prevent landlords from profiteering out of the wild demand for houses, by forbidding any raising of the rent of houses below a

certain rental and forbidding also eviction of tenants ; and, secondly, a Housing Bill giving large powers to local authorities, to which was subsequently added a subsidising of private enterprise. The problem was colossal, and it had taken the country as a whole badly by surprise. There was more than one reason for it. The rate of house-building before the war had not been adequate to the demand, so that there was a shortage to start with. When the war broke out, house-building, which would in any case have slackened, had soon been forbidden entirely : building labour and building material had to be restricted to Government purposes alone. To the normal shortage was added a complete stoppage of supply. The official estimate, putting the deficiency at 350,000 houses, was certainly not over the mark. Upon this supervened a quite unusual demand for houses at the end of the war. Many, in the pressure of work, had given up those they had ; and there were thousands and thousands of couples who, quite rightly in those tragically uncertain years, married while they could, but being, save for leave times, separated had not had need for a house till the war was over.

Another effort in this direction—well meant, but more futile in the end—was a Land Settlement Bill. There had been much talk about the effect that army life would have upon men in making them unwilling to go back to town streets and office stools. Surely great numbers of them would want to find open-air occupation, and would rejoice to put their gratuities into some kind of small-holding enterprise. Besides, encouragement of this would help to relieve the rush back into the employment market. Some large tracts of agricultural land were bought, training centres established on them and small-holding colonies sketched out. The measure was criticised heavily : was it sensible to spend money in putting raw men on to the land when all kinds of

agriculture had been more or less insolvent for years? Sentiment had its way, and the Bill went through; but the colonies never showed any indication of success, and were soon abandoned.

The House was tackling also some of the ramifications of Government expenditure. The worst of it was that it was just in the last year or so of the war that organisation of supplies had reached its full strength, and there were huge establishments barely finished, or just at high pressure, when the Armistice came. There were great aeroplane works (we had at the end been building 4000 planes a month and equipping 200 squadrons in place of the 6 with which we began the war), and aerodromes with acres of concrete floors and hangars. There was Gretna, a complete town of munitions, and all the other factories which had enabled us to fire on one single day towards the end of the war—the day when the Hindenburg Line was broken—950,000 shells, costing nearly £4,000,000. There was the very “hush-hush” establishment at Richborough, of which the public hardly knew anything, but which was rumoured to have turned that ancient relic of a place into the most modern kind of port for a train-ferry service which would marvellously hasten delivery to the armies. The two places most prominent in discussion in the House were the Crippenham motor depot near Slough and the Chepstow shipyards. About the latter the Government made the interesting suggestion that, if some labour organisation could be formed to take them on and work them co-operatively, they might have the site and the plant; it seemed a pity to scrap works which, unlike the munition factories, might well find a place in peace production. But no one was ready for such an experiment and the idea was dropped. The Crippenham depot was for centralising in one spot the vast business of war motor-transport. It was seized upon as a piece of expenditure

which could most easily be cut off at once; but again the Government hesitated about scrapping works that might still have their use. A Select Committee was appointed to consider plans, and meanwhile there was a good case for retaining a depot at which the mass of transport vehicles could be collected for disposal.

At the beginning of the session the House had started on two Bills of government organisation. The Ministry of Health Bill was merely reconstructive; it gave, besides a new name, a new shape, a better meaning, and powers more in accordance with modern notions, to the old Local Government Board. The Ministry of Transport Bill, an effort to carry on one of the easiest of the war's lessons of organisation, was more jealously scrutinised. It gave the new Minister drastic powers of regulation (this was the first Bill to go far towards that surrender of the powers of Parliament which later fell under criticism) and most unusual powers of expenditure. As it was quite generally known that Sir Eric Geddes's position of Minister without Portfolio was a waiting-room until the new Ministry should be established, the apprehension about these powers was strong. Business autocrats—with their swift taking of decisions and their imaginative flights in expenditure—had been exactly what a war called for; but to launch one with unprecedented powers upon the country in peace time was quite another matter. In the end, the Minister's authority in expenditure was curtailed and made much more subject to Parliamentary sanction.

The Mines Commission duly reported on the fixed date. There were, however, three separate reports. The chairman, with the independent members, reported in favour of a wage advance of 2s. a day, the reduction of hours to 7 until July 1921, and then the establishment of the 6-hour day, and a levy of 1d. a ton to raise a fund for improving housing. The mine-owners on the

Commission reported for a wage advance of 1s. 6d. and for a 7-hour day without any future reduction to 6 hours. The miner members reiterated their demand for a 30 per cent. wage advance, an immediate 6-hour day and nationalisation of the mines. On this the Government offered the miners the terms of the first of these reports, adding to them some provisions for giving miners a voice in management, and a promise of progressive re-organisation of the whole industry. The miners, under Mr Smillie's leadership, were steadily growing more insistent on this last point. Nothing, they kept on saying, could make lasting peace in the industry until the mines were nationalised. Their great point was that the constant reply of the mine-owners to their demands—that the industry could not afford to grant them—could, no doubt, be proved true as things stood ; but that was no answer to the argument that a nationalised industry, pooling output and using boldly every modern idea for the scientific exploitation of coal, would soon show what the industry could really afford. For the moment the miners agreed to the Government's offer, and left this larger question to further consideration by the Commission. Meanwhile Mr Smillie on the one side, and on the other the Duke of Northumberland, showing himself an acute as well as an irreconcilable maintainer of private rights, carried on a duel over nationalisation in print and on platforms, as slashing in phrase as it was good-tempered on the whole in spirit.

It was gradually becoming apparent that much of the nagging and grumbling which had been filling the air was part of a general hurry and impulsiveness quite as ready to find vent in many other ways, rushing back to pre-war amusements or keeping the headier distractions of the war time spinning. In that mixed way people grumbled at the packed crowding of buses and tubes, and yet enjoyed the bustle and energetic

life of it after the brooding dull weariness, the loose individual scramble after so long marching in ranks. They grumbled about their jobs or their lack of them, yet enjoyed the tolerance that did not expect the "demobbed" to do very much for a while. They grumbled about profiteering and the cost of drinks, and enjoyed the equal tolerance they extended to themselves not to begin anxieties about money just yet. This gayer side of the restlessness and hurry grew until, for the few months of summer, it almost swept irritation out of the national temper. Partly this was because warmth and beauty came with a rush over the country that year. The cold dreary winter, as it happened, had lasted very long, and bitter winds had held everything back. The late spring came with extraordinary loveliness of leaf and flower all at once; and the country seemed to shake off the war. The soldiers were all home, except those whom tempting increases of pay and promise of generous leave had secured for the Army of Occupation; and they were home with gratuities to spend. There had been lavish out-of-work donation, and there was a good stock of savings from the high war wages of whole families. It was as if people, cheered by the sunshine, suddenly grew sick of worrying and fussing, and plunged into a sort of playtime after the hard years. Everyone was out and about. Men after years of camps and billets, women after the busy communal life of hospitals and munitions and motor units and offices, did not settle down as thankfully as they thought they would in the days when home was only a thing to long for. Besides, thousands upon thousands had but makeshift homes, and little to keep them indoors. There was an immense boom in small cars and motor-cycle combinations, a demand that no supply could overtake, even when the surplus war-stuff of that kind was thrown on the market. There was a revel of dining and dancing,

theatre-going, cinema-going. Cinemas, stimulated by the war-time amusement-hunting, were arising now as big comfortable places, the very thing for the rapid methods and flamboyant style of the reinforced-concrete architecture which particularly distinguished them. Dinner-dancing was no longer dining first and dancing afterwards, but dining round a dancing floor and dancing between courses. Jazz bands swarmed; it was an occupation jumped at by groups of demobilised friends with gratuities to pool for a bit of capital.

The post-war world let itself go, and had a look at itself. The most obvious change, at first sight, was in the women. Short skirts and bobbed hair, taken to for practical reasons during the war, had grown more and more familiar sights, but only now did people begin to see how universal they were. The new fashion outline meant a new mind also; war work and the breaking of home ties had quickened enormously the casual, rather flippant, independence of the young generation. But there were other changes as well. In the mixed life of the new armies' messes, and of all the ways in which women had worked together, with the odd mixing, too, that war-made fortunes had induced, a certain kind of exclusiveness in amusements had vanished. It was no longer the comparatively few who came out to spend money of an evening. Men and women of a kind who had thought but sparsely of entertainment before the war had learned, in leave times and so on, of the many amusing things there are to do; and they turned this first summer of peace into a long and cheery leave. Nothing great or even very interesting on the stage or in literature was stimulated into life. Nothing great was called for. The eagerness was only for amusement, and revues and dancing and night-clubs answered it.

There was a disturbing and ugly flash from the night-club life early in the year, when a young actress, Miss



Billie Carleton, died of drug-taking, and a man, escaping the charge of manslaughter which had been the inquest verdict, was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for conspiring to procure cocaine. This was the first case that brought cocaine-taking sensationally into the papers. There had been, quite early in the war, some prosecutions of Colonial soldiers for procuring cocaine, but they had been more or less hushed up. In the later war years, however, there had been talk about cocaine habits growing in the feverish pleasure-hunting and nerve strain; Miss Carleton's death produced indignant comment on the traffic.

By mid-June, people were amusing themselves far too successfully to pay much attention to the Peace when at last it was signed. The terms were known in May, when they were communicated to the Germans; and if the indemnity figures were far smaller than those which had been tossed about in December they were big enough to look impressive. The German delegates, protesting strongly, had taken the terms back to Germany to lay before the Reichstag. But they had had to accept them, and the signature of the Peace Treaty was about to take place. The popular mind in England had half forgotten this business of dictating terms to Germany when a strange almost crazy piece of news flung it back into strong feeling again. On 23rd June the Germans scuttled their surrendered ships lying in Scapa Flow, and all had gone to the bottom, except one of the battle-ships and five of the light cruisers. There was a wave of amazed disgust. It looked like such a childish gesture of spite, or worse. *Punch's* cartoon depicted the top of a mast sticking out solitary from the waves, flying the signal: "Germany expects every man this day to do the dirty." Admiral von Reuter took full responsibility. He explained that, the surrender of the fleet having been part of the terms of the Armistice, and the

Armistice terms being superseded by the acceptance of the Peace terms, he had regarded himself as free to carry out the orders given at the beginning of the war that no German ship was ever to be surrendered. But the explanation seemed as childish as the act; the fleet *had* been surrendered, and it was incredible that German naval men could really feel the bitterness of that fact cured by such action as this.

The incident made much more lively than it would otherwise have been the concentration at the final moment on the scene at Versailles—the long line of the delegates of the Allied Powers, the fateful document which might or might not hold a new world in it, and the entry of the German delegates to sign it under those watching eyes. There had been more magnificent and glittering ends to other wars, the gold-laced, high-collared, beribboned splendours of Vienna, the helmeted militarism of 1871 on this same spot. Here was only commonplace civilian garb, almost a pose of democratic plainness. But that was the right note. Pomp of uniforms might be in place when a clash of professional armies had brought their masters, kings and marshals, face to face in the end. This war had not been like that. It had been the war of the ordinary man; and that plain-garbed grouping of the victors and the solitary entry of the vanquished made its right end. For this was not only a peace—it was a giving of sentence.

The cheap ideas of a more specific act of judgment, which had inspired the "Hang the Kaiser" cry at the election, still survived. Mr Lloyd George announced in the House on 3rd July, in his formal statement on the Peace, that it had been agreed at Versailles that a Tribunal of the Allied Powers to conduct the trial of the Kaiser should sit in London, and that requisition would be made of Holland for his surrender. And the House of Commons cheered! It is no wonder that months

were even now to pass before the clap-trap of the whole notion finally revealed itself. It was not until early in 1920 that *Punch* published its cartoon of the conversation between Holland and the Entente Policeman:

HOLLAND: "So you'd like me to surrender the Kaiser?"

ENTENTE POLICEMAN: "Well, I didn't go so far as that. I only asked you for him."

Concentration on the scene at Versailles was brief. Not even Mr Lloyd George could get any importance out of it, or control the bored sense that the Peace was an anti-climax, when the "demobbed" feeling had had hold of people for weeks and had been breaking out in so many exuberant directions. There had been a week of tense excitement in May over the first attempt to fly the Atlantic, made by Mr Hawker and Commander Mackenzie-Grieve. Flying had made such enormous advances during the war that the public rather hastily assumed that there was nothing which could not now be achieved. The check was all the sharper when no more news of the airmen came after their start. Days went by—a whole week—and then with immense relief people read that the two had been picked up in mid-Atlantic by a small steamer, transferred to H.M.S. *Revenge*, and had just been landed at Thurso. They travelled up to a tremendous reception in London, to be decorated by the King, and lunched by *The Daily Mail*, which had offered a prize of £10,000 for the first successful Atlantic flight. The excitement of the gallant opening bid for the prize had hardly died down when it was won. In June, Captain Alcock and Lieutenant Whitten-Brown flew over, in 16 hours 12 minutes, and there was quite enthusiasm enough left to rise to the occasion. The King knighted them both, and Mr Churchill, whose Department included now the Air Service, made the presentation of *The Daily Mail* cheque.

The Peace celebrations in London—the march of troops, headed by General Pershing and the Americans, then Lord Beatty leading the navy detachments and Lord Haig the army, with Marshal Foch riding beside him—were too belated to mean very much. Peace had been uncomfortable, far from the blissful coming right of everything which had been expected. There had been too much that made us talk of winning the war and losing the peace. The march was just a show, a day's excitement for the crowds, a stirring of memories for the demobilised, but no great climax of triumph.

The tide of high spirits was, in fact, already beginning to run down. Before the House adjourned in August it had to pass hurriedly a Bill attempting to soothe the outcry against high prices. There was still no real grasping of the fact that all our conceptions of prices would have to be changed; people were clinging incurably to the expectation of the return of pre-war prices. There was ceaseless complaint of profiteering, and talk of tradesmen and farmers and market-gardeners actually destroying their goods rather than let prices down. Rationing and the registration of customers were still in operation—the Food Controller was talking about keeping them on through the coming winter—and caused mixed feelings. It might be dangerous to take them off, and yet they meant absence of competition for custom, which might well be part of the profiteering game. The new Bill set up local tribunals for controlling prices, with county appeal tribunals. Economists might be wise about it, and dismiss it as a mere sop; the tribunals would soon find how little they could effect. But something had to be done, in a state of feeling so violent that Lord Milner could warn the House of Lords, in the debate on the Bill, that there would be a revolt unless some action were taken.

The main interest of the adjournment was Mr Lloyd

George's statement on the mines. The Sankey Commission had issued further reports at the end of May. There were four of them. One, by the chairman alone, was in favour of immediate nationalisation of the coal royalties. The miner members and one or two of the independent members were for complete nationalisation. The mine-owners reported, of course, completely against it. Sir Arthur Duckham reported in favour of the State taking, with due compensation, the mineral rights, but not ownership of the mines. Three out of the four reports were thus in favour of some measure of nationalisation. But it was not a fortunate moment for the idea. Just when the country was in a mood of disillusioned contempt for Government Departments it was not likely to agree with the miners' assertion that Government management would cure their troubles. Nor, when it was galled by the running on of the vast war expenditure and the swollen Ministries, was it likely to take kindly to the prospect of one more Ministry. It had just accepted two new bodies, the Ministry of Transport and the Electricity Commissioners, but one to work the mines would be much more speculative. Besides, the country was peevish again with industrial unrest. Railwaymen had been demanding the promised consideration of their conditions<sup>1</sup>; police forces had been striking again (the Home Secretary gave the Metropolitan Police short shrift, but there was more trouble in Manchester, and in Liverpool even rioting); and, above all, the new conditions for the miners agreed upon in March had been made the reason for an advance of six shillings a ton in the price of coal. Altogether it was no favourable time for a policy of nationalisation; and unusual as it might be to set aside flatly the majority of a Royal Commission, anxious as some might be about the closing of the door to the one thing the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 264.

miners were set upon, Mr Lloyd George informed the House that the Government had definitely rejected that policy.

The whole question was not nearly so urgently on the public mind as the need for economy. That was the one popular cry of the autumn and winter. Just before the adjournment the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Austen Chamberlain, had been very gloomy and apprehensive about the national finances. Budget figures, like prices, were still rising instead of falling; the estimated revenue now was £1,160,000,000. With all the hot suspicion of profiteering, this looked at any rate like taking money off the war fortunes; and there was a touch of the same kind of view in Sir Thomas Whitaker's contention that the income-tax authorities ought to be very strict and inquisitive about wage-earners' incomes. A "Victory Loan" in June raised £250,000,000. But by July the Chancellor was taking depressed views. Speaking on the Consolidated Fund Bill, he said that the position was turning out far worse than he expected. Revenue was proving to be badly below his estimate, and expenditure had been over it. One accompaniment of the strain was that the famous Liberal finance of the pre-war years began to wear thin. Talk about import duties, which would have roused the strongest feeling in 1912 or 1913, slid into the debates, and Free Traders, doing their best not to look foolish, hung on to saving phrases about "key industries"—a helpful catchword starting on its career at this time. But, even when so many handsome dogmatisms of those earlier years were tottering, there was something altogether too bland in the placid announcement that land valuation and the taxation of unearned increment—the core and pith of the great "People's Budget," the policy for which it had been worth while to challenge the Lords, the bulwark against Protection, the rich resource for

social welfare, the banner that Mr Lloyd George had carried so assuredly through a lurid battle-smoke of Limehouse speeches and a whirlwind election — had proved unremunerative and unworkable, and would now be reconsidered with a view to their extinction.

But across the gulf the war had dug between 1919 and the fierce political battles of 1909 not many people reached back for stones to throw. The country did not want that kind of bickering. It wanted—and more than ever after the Chancellor's anxious warnings—economy. There was no excuse for more delays, now the Peace had been signed. Again, something had to be done which might be soothing, and directly after the adjournment Mr Lloyd George issued instructions for every Department to overhaul its work and its personnel, and produce a scheme for cutting down its costs.

He, with one or two other prominent people, Mr John Burns among them, received just now a testimonial of a kind unusual in public life. Mr Andrew Carnegie died at the beginning of August; and among his bequests were one of £2000 a year to Mr Lloyd George and one of £1000 a year to Mr John Burns. Mr Carnegie had been a multi-millionaire with a reputation all his own. The story of his rise to enormous wealth in the Pittsburgh steel factories was one not often to be told of a Britisher; and there was a sort of national pride taken in his having come back to buy a Scottish castle and settle down over here to spend his money. He had for many years been making for himself a special place in the national life, by giving and equipping public libraries, large and small, and later by the foundation of the Carnegie Trust for various educational purposes. Though he was said to have once been worth £70,000,000, he left now only £5,000,000 to be disposed of by his will.

September brought an odd little distraction to the newspapers. One of the grievances left by the Peace

Conference in re-drawing the map of Europe had been the rejection of the Italian claims to certain ports on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Now Signor d'Annunzio, with a romantic writer's mind made even more romantic by war service, putting himself at the head of the more violent section of the protesting Italians, organised a military expedition of his own, descended on Fiume, and annexed it. This condottiere gesture provided exciting news for some days.

A dashing figure of quite another kind, yet also romantic, was lost to English life in that month by the death of Lord Beresford. Marked out early in his career by a courageous exploit with the gunboat *Condor* during the Egyptian campaign of 1884, he had come to impress himself upon the public imagination in the way of Lord Fisher at a later date, as the breezy sailor carrying the interests of the service through the short-sighted and dusty tangles of politics. The people loved his Irish humour, his downright speech, and his buoyant ways, even though, as he grew older, his appearances in politics had been apt to become a little acrid.

In the autumn another kind of complaint began to grow up beside the economy cry. It was that no one was working hard enough. That pleasant "demobbed" feeling must come to an end. It was, in fact, dying out. Uniforms, which had lingered about for months, were disappearing fast, and people were discovering that no one wanted any longer to listen to anything about the war. Better settle down again, and get on with jobs. But that, said the newspapers, was what nobody was really doing. They began to lecture the public on elementary economics; the great fact to face was that for all the four years of war we had made no fresh wealth, and had blown away much of what we had had before. This was what we were suffering from, and no amount of economy in Government or anywhere else could help,



if we did not understand that we had to work, not merely as hard as before, but far harder, to make up for the missed wealth-production of those years. Yet there were the mines, held up by disputes about pay and hours, and coal production disastrously below the normal. There were railwaymen, striking in September, causing a return of war regulations, and a call for volunteer service for food supplies and for a vast milk depot in Hyde Park—a grave disturbance of all sorts of industry just when our railways should, like everything else, have been more, and not terribly less, busy. There was the Trade Union Congress, angry still about the war with Russia (though by that time the withdrawal of the Murmansk and Archangel forces had been decided upon, and was being organised), and insisting upon nationalisation, instead of facing the urgent need to get industry on its feet again.

Out of all the dissatisfaction grew a movement for founding a Middle-Class Union. The idea was that, between organised labour on the one side, and a swollen well-entrenched Government on the other, the black-coated salary-earners and the drawers of modest dividends were going to be badly squeezed. Wages constantly forced up, hours forced down, and output restricted, were going to keep price-levels high; and it was notorious that earned salaries moved far less easily, if they moved at all, to meet higher prices than wages did, with the union organisation behind them. Incomes from investment did not move at all, so that rising prices simply halved them automatically. At the same time it was upon salaries and incomes of this kind that the tax collector fastened most ruthlessly. It would be wise, then, for the middle classes to take a leaf out of the wage-earners' book, and have their own organisation. But, of course, middle classes are not an entity, like a trade; they could never have a true union existence;

and even if they approximated to it they could not act as sharply and menacingly as a trade could upon the national life. The idea never came to much.

Though the war was by now boring as a topic of ordinary talk, there was plenty of interest in some war books which came out in the autumn. The most piquant was General French's book, *1914*, which aroused some very strong feeling. The sensational part of it was French's revelation of the fact that he had deliberately set going the newspaper campaign against Lord Kitchener which dragged into publicity the shell controversy in 1915. Over this action, as a matter of personal conduct, of service etiquette, of military loyalty, of a real duty to the nation over-riding all these considerations, argument raged—on the whole, not to French's credit. There had been already too much gossip about his period as Commander-in-Chief. Free though they were of personal implications of this kind, the memoirs of Lord Fisher and Lord Jellicoe were published too soon; the acuteness of certain differences of opinion during the war was still too strong. Memoirs that were widely read for quite other reasons were those of Tirpitz, Ludendorff and Falkenhayn. People were eager for the chance of seeing the war, for the first time, from the other side, and finding out a little of what we had been able only to guess at during those years. The main burden of these three books was to throw the blame for Germany's collapse upon the civilian population and the civilian leaders, who had, according to these writers, let the fighting spirit down. The other main impression left by them, rightly or wrongly, was that they justified all we had felt about Prussianism: they were the very voice of a rigid military caste regarding the whole German Empire in the spirit of a drill-sergeant.

But that, surely, was to be the voice of a completely buried past now, whether in Germany or anywhere else.

The first anniversary of the Armistice was marked by the launching of the League of Nations Union at a great meeting in London. From the moment of the cessation of hostilities Lord Robert Cecil had been devoting himself to a movement for making the League of Nations an active reality in the public mind. Few people knew then that the Covenant which President Wilson had made his own peculiar task in the Peace settlement was in origin largely Lord Robert's work. But they had come to know that there was a man in England who was not going to let us decline upon the vague assurance that the Covenant existed, any more than he was going to allow us to say that the League was a piece of idealism, which would crumble into futility at the first national quarrel. He was going to make public opinion constantly aware that the Covenant was an instrument for use, not an automatically acting preventive, a means by which nations could avoid wars if they wished to strongly enough, not a heaven-sent guarantee against their own foolishnesses ; he was not going to let us, as it were, hang it up somewhere as a lifebelt, forget about it, and then, grabbing at it when we had navigated into some disaster, curse it because it would not save us from drowning. He had spoken, with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Grey of Fallodon,<sup>1</sup> at a great meeting in the Albert Hall in June, just before the signing of the Peace Treaty. The Armistice meeting was to start the League of Nations Union as an organisation for keeping the League in the public mind, and making us follow its work. At the moment there was enthusiasm enough. It was to be Lord Robert's greatest achievement that he was not misled by the ease of the start.

A remarkable new subject of conversation appeared in November. There had been an eclipse of the sun at the end of May, with statements in the papers that the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Grey had accepted a peerage, with this title.

usual astronomical expeditions to take observations had a special interest and importance, because a new theory, the Einstein theory, which the public vaguely understood to have something to do with the transmission of light, and of which a total eclipse would provide a possible test, might be either verified or disproved. It was said informally, when the expeditions returned, that the theory had been proved to be sound, but the full calculations necessary were not available until November. It turned out that the whole business was entirely beyond even the sketchiest comprehension by the ordinary man. All that he gathered was that the shortest way between two points is not necessarily what we call a straight line, that Newton's theory of gravitation was only of partial validity, that Euclidean geometry had little relation to the facts of the universe, that generally speaking we had forgotten to allow for the whole universe being on the move—a number of very dim notions. To mathematicians and scientists of the first order, it appeared, the Einstein theory was one conclusive step of a prolonged recent remaking of human conceptions of the universe. The ordinary man looked at the equations blankly, and decided he could never really know anything about it.

On 1st December the House of Commons received its first woman member. One of the last acts of the war Parliament had been to hurry through a Bill supplementing the grant of the vote to women by enabling them to sit in the House. The General Election had been too hasty for the candidature of women to begin then. But it is curious that the first woman's candidature, when it did take place, was not the concerted action of any feminist movement celebrating a great advance. On Mr Astor's succession to the peerage his wife stood for the vacated seat. So rapidly had we taken to the idea of women in politics that Lady Astor's

election roused little discussion except in the form of entertaining questions of how a woman member might be expected to conform to the sober costumes of the House, whether she would retain her hat, and if so how she could comply with certain customs in debate. Lady Astor appeared, led up by the Prime Minister and Mr Balfour to take the oath, in costume that suited very well the ordinary masculine town clothes, and was altogether an admirable introducer of a new age. Her arrival coincided happily with the last stages of a Bill removing sex disabilities in the profession of the law.

The most important piece of work of this autumn session was the Bill making reforms in the Government of India. The reforms initiated in 1909, when Mr John Morley was Secretary of State and Lord Minto Viceroy—the first marked step away from purely official government, giving natives of India elective seats on the Provincial Councils and the opportunity of bringing criticism to bear—had done little to placate Indian Nationalist feeling. That had received formidable reinforcement of late. Beside the original movement, violent in word and often in action, had arisen one far more difficult to handle, a non-resistance movement aiming at its object by complete dissociation from everything Western, and intended to become one gigantic boycott. At its heart was a revered and gentle figure, Gandhi, who knew how to give to Nationalism the fire, not of violence, but of that austerity and abstinence which can be so invincible an inspiration to Eastern minds. Disappointed by the failure of the Morley-Minto reforms, the Liberal Government had sent out Mr Montagu, when he was Secretary of State; and he, in conjunction again with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, had drawn up a long and elaborate report, on which the new Bill was now based. The report had been criticised as making, in an enthusiasm for self-government, the

mistake which Mr Morley had avoided—that of thinking that the demand of the peoples of India, with all their conditions of sharp religious hostilities, widely differing racial characters, and vast masses of extremely poor and ignorant peasantry, must necessarily be met by a representative system of a wholly Western type. Mr Morley had given powers of criticism and advice. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report introduced a measure of control over Ministers in the manner of Western Parliaments. The system which the new Bill set up was a dyarchy. It divided power in two ways: first by reserving some subjects of administration wholly to the Central Government, and second, by dividing the subjects of provincial governments into “reserved” and “transferred” subjects. The latter were placed in the hands of a body of Ministers responsible to the elected Chamber of the provincial assembly, and in this branch the attitude of the Lieutenant-Governor of a Province to the Ministers was to be that of the head of a Western State to a Cabinet dependent on a majority. The former branch remained in the hands of the Lieutenant-Governor and his Executive Council. The other large change made by the Bill was that in place of the Viceroy’s Council was set up a bi-cameral Central Assembly, an elected Chamber and a Council, in neither of which was there an official majority.

Other associations attached themselves to the return of the Prince of Wales from a tour to the United States and Canada in the battleship *Renown*. He brought with him the beginnings of a reputation for making a charming success of such affairs, which later years were to increase. He had captivated New York; and sport and camping and ranching in Canada had captivated him. His return now was his first real entry upon popularity at home. The country had liked the simplicity with which he had been sent to Oxford and the stories

of the frankness with which he had lived an undergraduate's life, enjoying most what was least hedged about by his princedom, like games and dinners in hall. That had been abruptly ended by the war; and it says much for the impression he had made on the public mind that the strongest feeling for him then was one of sympathy with him in his inability to make the authorities let him fight exactly as all the rest of his generation.

Before the year was over Ireland was beginning to take that place in the news which was to make the next eighteen months so tragic and dreadful. Absorbed in their own affairs, English people had thought little of what was happening over there. There had been a moment of mixed vexation and amusement in March, when Mr de Valera, who had been one of the Sinn Feiners arrested in 1918, had escaped from Lincoln gaol. The amusing part of it was in the stories of two beguiling Irish girls, who had used their good looks to help the escape. Since then there had been constantly recurring accounts of attacks upon police barracks and upon post offices, and the ambushing and killing of constables. But to people in general this meant little more than a bad phase of the unhappily usual state of Ireland, a recurrence of the old "moonlighter" days. By December, however, the seriousness of what was going on became apparent. The sporadic attacks were growing more frequent, more determined; and then came a murderous attack on General French, the Viceroy; his car was ambushed on a road, and his escape was extraordinary. That was just before Mr Lloyd George produced yet one more scheme for Home Rule and the difficulty of Ulster—a system of two separate Parliaments, with a single Federal Council of forty for the whole of Ireland, elected in equal proportions by the two legislatures. The scheme was said to be the work

of a new genius at constitution-making, Mr Lionel Curtis. The main comment on the proposal at the moment was that it was a pity it had been so long delayed. For a whole year the Sinn Feiners, keeping away from Westminster, had had their hands on Ireland, with disaffection growing more organised the whole time. However, here was the new Home Rule at last, and a fresh start on the old road of conciliatory proposals and coercion of lawlessness.



## CHAPTER X

### 1920-1922 : THE PAINFUL TRUTH

THE history of the next three years belongs to this volume only in summary, as a concluding chapter. In detail those years are the beginning of a new time, of the discovery that the post-war world was not the pre-war world crippled yet recovering, but something totally new. All that is in place here is a brief recounting of the disappearance of much that we had carried over, in hope, from war time into peace—forms of government control and national organisation, and coalition of parties; the fading of the belief that we had been, as a people, so soundly and healthily shaken together that we could not fall again into the old lack of understanding; the gradual discovery that, instead of having been helped forward, in spite of all its pain and horror, by the war, we had been very badly knocked down by it. To the next period, rather than to the one here related, belongs the fact that the great majority of people worried about all this less than might have appeared, and got along quite well in casual detachment from solemn people who had made such a mess of life, and were so unsuccessfully trying to clear it up.

One of the baffling aspects of the time is its maze of contradictions. Although by every showing people ought to have been leading a rather uncomfortable, pinched and hampered existence, it was difficult to see any signs of this. There was talk about "the new poor," the old aristocratic and society families falling upon hard times, giving up their country houses and town mansions to

make way for the war-wealthy and the profiteers. Changes of that sort there were, but not to any marked degree. The movement from large houses had many other reasons behind it. One was that domestic servants were becoming difficult to get or to keep, partly because war work had given young women much more independent ideas of employment, partly because even without the war influence they had begun to revolt against an occupation which employers had done nothing to adapt to new times. Another reason was that people were finding that in the many amusing ways of spending money the pomps and solemnities of a big house were a dull form of costliness. A large and pleasant flat solved the servant problem, and left money for restaurant dinners, bridge-parties, cars and race-meetings. The same kinds of adjustment were going on all through the professional classes.

The truth, perhaps, is that most of the talk about the new poverty was in the early half of 1920, when the effect of the war on prices was at its worst, and the index-figure of comparison with pre-war prices rose to 176. The Budget for this year, too, was as depressing as that of the year before; the revenue to be raised was over £1,340,000,000; letter postage went up to 2d., telegrams to 1s., and spirits and beer were more heavily burdened than ever; the Excess Profits Duty was raised again, and a Corporation Tax on limited liability companies was imposed. Moreover the railways added a further 25 per cent. to the 50 per cent. increase of fares.

Yet even so it would have been difficult for a casual visitor to observe any striking signs of narrowed resources. He would not have seen the universities and public schools less full (they were, in fact, more crowded), the restaurants emptier, the golf-courses less populated at a week-end, less cars on the road, or expensive shops beginning to look seedy. People were

convinced that the financial pressure was largely unnecessary, and that it was not for them but for the Government to economise. A good deal had been done. The Food Control and Shipping Control Departments, and the renamed Ministry of Munitions, had been disbanded in the latter part of 1919; and the sale of surplus stores had begun. Quantities of linen, tons of wire, had been put on the market at bargain prices; Mr Mallaby Deeley rushed into fame by making a great business of selling the standard suits of clothes which had been prepared for demobilisation, and left on the Government's hands in hundreds of thousands; outfitters secured masses of army shirts and socks and other garments, good money's worth at the few shillings asked for them. But no one believed that economising had made more than a beginning. Budget figures would have to come down a lot more. Behind that conviction people comfortably sheltered themselves in going on much as usual with their own personal expenditure.

So the newspapers still had plenty to lecture the nation about. We were all too frivolous. Dress was becoming a scandal; this was the time when *Punch* had a picture of a girl whose nightmare was that she had gone to a dance in her nightgown, and found herself embarrassingly overdressed. Dancing was more than a craze; people had their inseparable partners, danced with them alone, and would not go to parties except in couples. The music was more jazz than ever; the dancing more lugubrious. It was no longer a pursuit for the young, either; the war had made a difference there; the older generation, finding itself not so old after all, no longer sat about bored and yawning. The theatre was frivolous; true, *Abraham Lincoln* had had its success in 1919, but the great hit of 1920 was *The Beggar's Opera*. Every class of society was frivolous, for cinemas, with their cheap seats, were packed to

watch Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, the trio who first became film idols over here. With the summer began the loud complaints about chars-a-banes invading the countryside. In the intervals of frivolity, depression awaited us. We might know, unhappily enough, that a nation could not send its youth to death for four years and keep its vitality. Yet we had still to learn that what was left of the younger generation was seared and, as it seemed, indifferent and unresponsive. The bored disillusion of young novelists betrayed the truth of new movements in painting and music as no stirring of fresh life, but only an impulse of scorn for the old. The elder generation had made a mess of the world; the younger seemed to be too contemptuous to mind about it. Every month some nation defeated us in one sport or another; the question of the wife in *Punch*, seeing her husband unusually interested in the paper—"What is it, dear? Has England won something?"—summed up the situation.

This was not a public mind likely to be judicious about any of its national affairs. It was snappy about all of them, and not even Mr Lloyd George could conjure with it any longer. He was leading a strenuous life, still to and fro across the Channel, or holding conferences with French Ministers at Sir Philip Sassoon's place, Lympne, or with his own Ministers at Chequers, the lovely Buckinghamshire house which Lord Lee had given to be a permanent country house for Prime Ministers, handy to London in this age when week-ending had become a necessity of life. The gift had been made during the war, but only now had the Prime Minister been able to begin to make much use of it. The French conversations were growing sharp in tone; and the British public, allowing too little for the fact that the French had had the war for four years on their

own outraged soil and we had not, was inclined to be hurt and vexed. About Russia the popular mind was merely hot-tempered, and abusive of Bolshevism. It was growing peevish with America, seeing the pound sterling drop actually below four dollars in the exchange; hearing gloomy predictions about the likelihood of New York, with the immense stores of gold which she had drawn during the war, taking the place of London as the world's money market; reckoning up the debt to America, and beginning to hint that as, in the end, she had had to do so little fighting, she might at least, by cancelling some of the loans, make up her due contribution to the effort that others had borne bloodily for four years.

Worst of all our national affairs was Ireland. By the summer of 1920 conditions there were atrocious. Against Sinn Féin, so much more sheer and open rebellion, so much better armed, than the old movement had been, the Government fell back upon its own men who had not forgotten their fighting. They reinforced the Royal Irish Constabulary by enlisting demobilised men who had not settled down again in civil life. Wearing with their khaki the dark caps of the R.I.C., they were attaining a grim notoriety as "the Black and Tans." For some months the conflict did not differ much, except in extent and persistence, from the old conditions of a period of coercion in Ireland. But a bitterer spirit crept in. The police and the Black and Tans were sick of meeting, in the old restrained ways, the perpetual ambushing and murder, and they took to reprisals. They might not be able to bring proper legal evidence against individuals of murder or complicity in murder, or of harbouring rebels, but they knew well enough houses and people that were giving secure refuge to Sinn Féin gunmen. They began their own raids, ambushings and killings: so many policemen killed, so many Irish to die

in retaliation. Late in the year the situation seemed one of absolute despair. Rebellion was not being weakened, yet the Government, engaged in its new Home Rule proposals, tried to forbid reprisals, and to bring conditions back to a struggle of law against disorder. In November, speaking in the City, Mr Lloyd George chose to be optimistic; we "had murder by the throat." But we had not. The Irish news grew bloodier, more brutal every week. In the very month in which Mr Lloyd George spoke, English officers, dragged out of bed one morning in hotels in Dublin, were shot in cold blood before the eyes of their wives.

Throughout the first six months of 1921 it had to be recognised that the state of affairs was no longer the suppression of a lawless element. It was full rebellion, working through the most difficult kind of guerrilla fighting, which reminded people of the last two years of the Boer War. Uniformed British forces were opposed to an elusive enemy, armed men at one moment, the next moment indistinguishable among the people of a little street, or scattered in farms. There was discussion of the possibility of using the methods of the later stages of the Boer War, lines of block-houses, and sweeps of region after region, interning women and children, and rounding up the men. That is, no doubt, what the war would have come to, had not the Irish question fallen, with many others, into the mood of wholesale change of mind, withdrawal, stopping short for a fresh start, which so curiously and distinctly marks the year 1921. It is the coming of that mood which justifies the inclusion of a brief summary of these years as the final chapter of the war period.

In many ways it was a melancholy, and even tragic, giving up of high hopes; an end to all notions that the ordeal had shown us new paths for the national life. The Government took its hand off every kind of control

or organising supervision which had seemed to offer fresh prospects of managing our affairs, and shut down all of its immediate "betterment" schemes. The reason for this was, indeed, not openly a denial of the ideals; it was the urgent and material reason of money. We could not afford what we were doing and what we had hoped to do. Budgets could remain at their present figures only by sending prices still higher, for they continued to involve the creation of Government credits. And that, by now, opened prospects of the gravest alarm, for warnings were under our eyes on the Continent. Austrian and German currency was beginning to go mad. Money had been manufactured for credits until prices had lost any relation to a fixed standard. People were going about with wads of notes drawn fresh from the banks every morning, which might, when drawn, buy them breakfast, but would be most unlikely to buy them supper. We were not near that kind of total collapse yet; but in a world of staggering currencies (French francs and Italian lire were none too steady) no risks should be run. That meant creating no more credits, but balancing the Budget on the year's revenue. The revenue in turn depended upon trade, upon output, upon the production of marketable wealth; and we could not be perfectly clear-headed about the amount of wealth we were producing till we removed all the disguising influences of Government control, subsidy of enterprise, or privileged output of any kind. Only by being sure of the net reality of trade figures could we genuinely balance Budgets.

So the last Government enterprises were wound up, and buildings and plant put on the market. The subsidy for housing was cut off, and the local authorities left to do what they could by housing bonds or other devices. Control was taken off articles of food and drink, off the mines, and then off the railways. There was a despairing

plea for keeping it on agriculture. The war had given us a fright about food supplies ; and there were many who, genuinely anxious for the chance of reviving a rural life which the last forty years had been steadily strangling, did not want it thrust into a neglected corner again. So strong was this feeling that, in their election manifesto, Mr Lloyd George and Mr Bonar Law had found it worth while to promise definitely that the agricultural minimum wage and the Wages Boards should survive. Now this promise went the way of the high hopes in general. Control was taken off there too, and the agricultural labourer left to take his chance. The land, vivified for this brief time by a Government concern for it at last, was thrown back into its old apathy. What made this worse was that another industry, one which could still frighten the Government, could not be so treated. The anger of the miners at being dropped back into decontrol promptly issued in a strike. They did not get control back, but they wrung from the Prime Minister a subsidy of £10,000,000 for the maintenance of the wage-level.

These withdrawals mounted up to a fairly complete abandonment of rosy electioneering promises. The process itself may have been inescapable ; the sadder fact was that the temper in which it was done showed hardly a remnant of that kindness and sympathy between classes of which the war idealists had seen visions, hardly a trace of that concern for the less fortunate of the community which the comradeship of the armies was supposed to have produced. It cost too much. We went back to the old unregulated scramble with an absence of regrets about doing so which would have looked like treachery if it could have been foreseen in 1915 or 1916. In some definite organisations—regimental associations, Old Comrades associations, the British Legion—links were kept with some, at least, of the



feeling of those days. But there had been no rebirth of the nation.

The Government could not scrap all its promises and do nothing about clearing up its own extravagances. A committee was set up to overhaul the Civil Service expenditure, since the Departments seemed unable to do it themselves. There was cynical comment at first when its chairman appeared in the person of Sir Eric Geddes, the notorious "big business" spender during the war. But "the Geddes axe" turned out to be a fairly drastic lopper. It did not do all that was asked of it. Sir Robert Horne, who had had another of the meteoric careers from business to high office, becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer after only two years' membership of the House, had asked for a reduction of £180,000,000 in Civil Service Estimates; what he got in the Geddes Committee's recommendations was £100,000,000; what he actually achieved in his next year's Estimates was £52,000,000. But with that, and with some use of the axe in the fighting services, Budgets did begin to come down substantially. The millions in them dropped back into three figures.

It was in July that Ireland came into this Government mood of reconsidering fundamentally most of what it was doing. In effect what Ministers did was to give up the idea that we were governing Ireland. That had been behind all the long drawn-out policy of mixed coercion and conciliation, based on the view that we must ourselves impose order there, whatever else we might do. When conversations took place between Government representatives and Sinn Fein leaders in prison, when Sir James Craig met Mr de Valera (a courageous act in those days of kidnapping and murder), Ministers were approaching the position of treating with Sinn Fein as the Provisional Government of another nation. True, at the stage which followed, when General

Smuts (there was almost the suggestion of an invaluable mascot about his undefined but powerful place in our affairs) went over to Ireland to enter on negotiations, the Government professed some detachment from his proceedings. In March Mr Asquith had been suggesting that "Dominion status" for Ireland might meet the case; and this gave added significance to the intervention of General Smuts, who had himself helped to bring a people long in racial antagonism to Great Britain to a successful Dominion status. There was a hard struggle yet before the end was reached. Mr de Valera was refusing to consider any status but that of a wholly independent republic. Ministers obviously could have nothing to do with that. Finally, by not insisting on the claim for independence being openly abandoned before the Conference met, a way was found for getting the Sinn Fein delegates to London to treat. Difficulties even then were far from over. A group of irreconcilable Conservatives were violently attacking in Parliament the very idea of negotiations. Mr de Valera and Mr Michael Collins were holding out to the last for independence. Ministers forced the end. They gave the Sinn Fein representatives point-blank the prospect of ruthless and full-scale war. A few hours later, under the formula of loyalty to the King "in virtue of the common citizenship of the British Commonwealth of Nations," the Irish Free State was born.

To the country at large this was a relief. Again, something had had to be done, and was at last done. But the strain of carrying it through, and of the following weeks in which the Treaty was under debate in Parliament, made very visible the beginning of the end of the Coalition. It had suffered for three years from the disappointments of peace, from the bewildered impatience at the thronging difficulties of recovery, from the delays and frictions with our Allies which beset the

remaking of Europe. No one could see what increased strength of purpose or vigour in action the continued suspension of party politics could be said to have produced. It did not appear to give the representatives of the nation any unusual kind of authority abroad. Nor could it be said that the fact that there was a Coalition Government in power really made much difference to the settlement of the Irish question. The situation over there had grown so bloodstained that, if the House of Commons had been constituted on normal party lines, the irreconcilables would not have been able to persuade it to refuse a settlement of any kind which would leave Ireland a part of the dominions of the Crown.

The continuance of the Coalition had involved the idea that the establishment of peace was some definite effort, *occupying a more or less definite time, which would command something of the same sort of national unity as the war had commanded, and should therefore be in the hands of a political unity.* Now we knew that peace and recovery were not effects to be produced, things to be done, but an existence to be lived. We had better begin to live it as normally as we could. All the decontrol had been recognition of this. Politics must be decontrolled as well. As early as January 1922 Unionist disaffection was active, Sir George Younger, their Whip, pressing for an immediate election. Mr Lloyd George held on for some months, which only made the Coalition plight worse. Those months brought into the open a factor new and dangerous in British politics, the existence of a huge election war-chest in the single control of Mr Lloyd George; there were acrimonious debates on the sale of honours and other methods by which election funds had long been accumulated. Those months landed us also in the most acutely anxious stage, of our post-war relations with France, over the disastrous advance of Greece into Asia Minor, which ended in a

few days of the gravest anxiety, when we hovered on the brink of renewed war with Turkey, and were saved only by the fine character of the man on the spot, Sir Charles Harington.

That unpardonable muddle brought the end. In October 1922 Mr Lloyd George resigned. It may be taken, perhaps, as a tribute to the place he had filled in the national life during the years before the war, to the unmatched energy and flexible readiness of mind with which he had held the nation during the war, to the dominance of his personality throughout the crisis, that not till the moment of his resignation can this volume be properly closed.



## INDEX

*Aboukir*, H.M.S., 157, 166  
*Abraham Lincoln*, 358  
 Aeroplanes. See Aviation  
 Africa, German East, 164, 268  
 Africa, German South-west, 164, 268  
 Africa, South, makes splendid response to call for men, 164; by 1917 had secured German colonies in South-west and East Africa, 268  
 Agadir incident, Morocco, 43; Conservatives and Liberals both disturbed, 49; critical event, 94  
 Agricultural training centres started, 334; abandoned, 335  
 Air Board housed in Hotel Cecil, 268-269  
 Air Force (became Royal in March 1917), their marvellous dexterity, 291  
 Air, Ministry of, 1917, 268; its creation puts air-fighting on its right level, 269; rapid development on Western Front, 269; combined with War Office, 323  
 Air-raids, brought reality of war, 234; daylight, 266; beginning to be defeated, 284  
 Alcock, Captain, first successful Atlantic flight, 342  
 Alexandra Palace, 168  
 Allan, Maud, 18  
 Allenby, General (now Lord), 280-281, 321  
 Allied armies under single command of Marshal Foch, 290  
 Allied War Council at Versailles, 291  
 Amalgamated Society of Engineers, 118  
 Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, 44  
 America, Peace Note from, 247; German Note to neutrals in submarine campaign decides

America—*continued*  
 her to enter the war, 247; declares war, 253; conscription, 253; large forces from, land in France, 302; first completely American battle, 307; post-war financial relations with, 360  
 Amiens, 290, 291, 302-303  
*Amphion*, H.M.S., sunk in the North Sea, 151  
 Amundsen reaches South Pole, 68, 88  
 Amusement, post-war eagerness for, 339  
 Angell, Norman, 27  
 "Anzacs," 189  
 Archangel, British forces at, 330; withdrawn, 348  
 Armentières, 291  
 Army Estimates, provide five aeroplanes, 45; air defence considered in, 105, 106. See also War  
 Army of Occupation, 329, 338  
 Artists sent out by Government to the Front, 231  
 Asche, Oscar, 35  
 Askwith, Mr., Board of Trade, mediator in strikes, 44  
 Asquith, H. H. (afterwards Lord Oxford and Asquith), introduces Parliament Bill, 12-15; conference on it broken up, 23, 24; announces Dissolution of Parliament, 25; letter to Mr Balfour stating Commons would be asked to disagree with Lords' amendments to Parliament Bill, 39; the Bill secured, 40; statement concerning *Panther*, 43; receives suffrage deputation, 56; passes Bill enacting Minimum Wage, 68; suffragettes attempt to burn theatre in Dublin where he was to speak, 83; did not resign when

Asquith, H. H.—*continued*

Government defeated on Home Rule amendment, 86; rebukes Ministers in Marconi affair, 101; produces scheme for "provisional exclusion of Ulster," 121; vote of censure on, for Irish policy, 122; takes over War Office, 125; Amending Bill for Home Rule, 133; conference on Ulster, 137; unable to come to any agreement, 137; on outbreak of war receives assurances from Unionists and Irish, 140; announces Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment Bills suspended until close of war, 156; still Prime Minister in Coalition Government, 186; forms small War Cabinet of five, 201; agitation fomented against him, and he resigns premiership, 243; suggests "Dominion status" for Ireland, 365

Astor, Lady, first woman member of Parliament, 351

Austria rejects Serbia's reply to ultimatum, 188; absolute collapse at end of war, 324; dissolved into racial groups, 324; its currency, 362

Avebury, Lord, 110

Aviation, progress of, 15; airships, 15, 45; dirigible flown—Cardiff to London, 15; first non-stop flight, London to Paris, 45; Army Estimates provide five aeroplanes, 45; plays greater part in war than was expected, 210; war stimulates inventiveness in two years to a point impossible in twenty of peace, 247; marvellous advance in manœuvres, 291; air-fighting prominent in all war news, 293; 4000 planes a month being built at end of war, equipping 200 squadrons, 335; first Atlantic flight attempted, 342; accomplished, 342. See also Loraine, Moisart, Rolls, Hawker, Alcock, Whitten-Brown

Aylesbury prison hunger-strike,

"BACKWOODSMEN," 38, 41

Baden-Powell, Sir Robert (now Lord), institutes Boy Scouts, 102, 103

Baillet, 291

Balfour, Arthur (now Earl Balfour), 15, 24; accused of scare-mongering, 27; moves vote of censure on Mr Asquith re Parliament Bill, 39; "Balfour must go," and resigns leadership, 54; pertinent question in Marconi affair, 101; on third passage of Home Rule Bill, 136; at the Admiralty in Coalition Government, 186; member of the "strategic Cabinet," 201; goes to Foreign Office in Lloyd George's ministry, 244; introduces Lady Astor into House, 352

Banbury, Sir Frederick, 86

Bank rate raised to 10 per cent., 141

Banking amalgamations to remould credit, 294; the "Big Five," 294

Barker, H. Granville-, 75

Barnes, Mr, on pensions, 248-249; succeeds Mr Arthur Henderson in Cabinet, 1917, 266, 314

Battenberg, Prince Louis of, forced to resign as First Sea Lord, 162

"Battle of Sidney Street," 28, 29

Batum—Baku line, British forces at, 330

Beatty, Admiral (now Lord), 171, 221; in Peace celebrations, 343

Beauchamp, Lord, First Commissioner of Works, 24

Beaverbrook, Lord, 268

Beecham, Sir Joseph, 126, 127

Beecham, Thomas, 126, 127

*Beggar's Opera, The*, 358

Belfast, 61, 62, 82, 134, 139

Belgium, neutrality of, violated by Germany, 141; appeals to Great Britain, 141; Belgian Government retires to Antwerp, 151; destruction of Louvain, 151; Germans occupy Brussels, 151; Antwerp abandoned, 160; France offers hospitality to Belgian Court, 160

- Belloc, Hilaire, 52
- Beresford, Lord Charles, dies, 347 ; his adventurous career, 347
- Bergson, M., French philosopher, 55
- "Betterment" schemes abandoned for lack of money, 362
- Billing, Pemberton, 210
- Bing Boys, The*, 262
- Birmingham*, H.M.S., sinks 'a submarine, 151
- Birrell, Augustine, 15 ; confesses he knew of Sinn Fein but under-rated its power and resigns Irish Secretaryship, 216, 218
- "Black and Tans," 360
- Black Book* articles, 300
- Blockade, Ministry of, 244
- Blucher*, German ship, taken by Admiral Beatty, 171
- Bone, Muirhead, 231
- Booth, "General," 78
- Booth, Mr., 178
- Boris Godounov*, 127
- Borstal system, 17
- Bowers, seaman of the Scott Expedition, 88
- Bowles, Gibson, action in the High Court, 107
- Bradlaugh, Charles, 59
- Brangwyn, Mr., 231
- Breslau*, cruiser, 166
- Brest-Litovsk, 271
- Brides in the bath murders, 195
- Brighton Pavilion as hospital for Indian troops, 206
- "British Covenant," 129
- British Legion, the, 363
- British Medical Association, 52, 92, 93
- Brooke, Rupert, 205
- Brown, Lieut. Whitten-, flies across Atlantic with Commander Alcock, 342
- Brusiloff, General, 219
- Bryce, Lord, 182
- Buchan, John, 268
- Budget, the People's, 9, 345 ; of 1909, 12, 59 ; Act passed to make financial resolutions of every Budget day legal, 108 ; of 1914, amazing, 129, 181, 183, 186 ; second War, £1,590,000,000, 209 ; of 1916, £500,000,000, 225 ; of 1917, £638,000,000, Budget—continued 259 ; of 1918, £842,000,000, 294 ; of 1920, 357 ; amounts to be decreased, 358 ; the millions dropped, 364
- Bulgaria, 197
- Bulwark*, battleship, blown up, 166
- Burgess swims the Channel, 46
- Burns, John, 77 ; scheme for dealing with Embankment homeless, 86 ; resigns on outbreak of war, 143 ; receives £1000 a year from Andrew Carnegie, 346
- Bystander, The*, 127
- CABINET of 1910, 24 ; of 1919, 323
- Cadeby, explosion in colliery while King and Queen there, 79
- Calcutia, 57
- Cambrai, 307
- Cammell Laird shipyards, 136
- Caporetto, 271
- Carleton, Miss Billie, dies of cocaine poisoning, 340
- Carlos, King of Spain, 22
- Carnarvon, investiture of Prince of Wales at, 36
- Carnegie, Andrew, his enormous wealth from Pittsburg steel, 346 ; bequeaths money to Lloyd George and John Burns, 346 ; founds Carnegie Trust for educational purposes, 346 ; and public libraries, 346
- Carpentier, Georges, 116
- Carson, Sir Edward (now Lord), 82, 85, 121, 122, 130, 132, 134, 137, 139, 186 ; his plea that vengeance should not be taken for the rebellion at the time, 216 ; resigns from War Cabinet to be free for Irish affairs, 296
- Case of Sergeant Grischa, The*, 276 (note)
- Casement, Sir Roger, lands in Ireland from Germany, which starts the Irish rebellion, 214-216
- Cassel, Sir Ernest, 94
- "Cat-and-Mouse Act," 97, 114, 182
- Cavell, Edith, 198
- Cawdor, Lord, 15



- Cecil, Lord Robert (now Lord Cecil), 132; President Wilson's Covenant owes much to his ideas, 350; founds League of Nations Union to educate public opinion about it, 350
- Censorship of plays, 76
- Central Agricultural Wages Board, 256-257
- Chamberlain, Arthur, 115
- Chamberlain, Austen, 15, 54, 186; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 345
- Chamberlain, Joseph, 85; his death and short account of his career, 134-135
- Chamberlain, Neville, 272
- Chaplin, Charlie, 359
- Charing Cross Bank failure, 30
- Château Thierry, 302-303
- Chelmsford, Lord, Viceroy of India, report on Indian reform, 352-353
- Chemical discovery, advance of, 70
- Chepstow shipyards, 335
- Chequers, Bucks, presented by Lord Lee to be permanent country house for Prime Ministers, 359
- China, rebellion in (1911), 57
- Chu Chin Chow*, 202
- Churches, their influence in the war, 262, 263
- Churchill, Lord, 75
- Churchill, Winston, Home Secretary, prison reforms of, 17; at Sidney Street, 29; goes to the Admiralty, 48; speech on Home Rule at Belfast, 62; his work at Admiralty the core of our relations with Germany, 94; attempt to find basis for "naval holiday," 94; critical and difficult position, 95; in Paris, 117; in Ulster crisis, 123; failure of naval brigades to relieve Antwerp, 160; Dardanelles campaign, 173, 179, 185; leaves Admiralty in Coalition Government, 186; goes to service in France, 217; speaks in House about evasion, the *embusqué* in uniform, 241, 313; at the War Office, 1919, 323
- Cinemas, post-war, reinforced concrete palaces, 339
- Cinematograph, early developments, 72, 73
- Cippenham, Slough, motor depot, 335-336
- Civil Service expenditure, committee on, 364
- Civil War, verge of, 10
- Civilian army piling up its millions like the fighting army, 261
- Civilian suits, standard, 322, 358
- Clemenceau in London, 319
- Clynes, Mr. Food Controller, 298; optimism, 299; urges lawfulness, 327
- Coal, shortage, 289, 300; loosely rationed, 301
- Cocaine traffic and procuring, 340
- Cody, Colonel, 107
- Collings, Jesse, 116
- Collins, Michael, 216, 365
- Colonial contingents from all parts of the Empire respond to the call for men, 164
- "Comb-out," 273, 301
- Compulsory Service Bill, 218, 240; 100,000 men less than estimated, 253
- Confusion and strain of early peace time, 318
- Connolly, James, supporter of Larkin, 111, 112, 216
- Conscientious objection, bitterness on, 240; objections more political than religious, 241; objectors sent to prison, 253
- Conscription in Ireland debated, 296
- Consolidated Fund Bill, 345
- "Contracting out," 81
- Convention in Ireland, 286; report of, 295
- Convention, Republican, of Sinn Féin held at Dublin, 325
- Coq d'Or, Le*, 127
- Corn Production Bill, 255, 257
- Corporation Tax, 357
- Cotton Spinners' Amalgamation, 118
- Cowdray, Lord, 269
- Cracow, 161, 107, 190
- Craig, Captain (Sir James), 137, 364

- Credit, first vote of, in war, £100,000,000, 149
- Cressy*, H.M.S., 157, 166
- Crowe, Lord, 15; India Office, 24; introduces Government Bill: its terms concerning reform of House of Lords, 24, 25
- Crippen case, 10, 17
- Crooks, Will, 157, 266
- Cross Channel flight, fourth, 15
- Crystal Palace, £90,000 subscribed to buy it, 104
- Cumberland, Prince Ernest Augustus of, marries Kaiser's only daughter, 105
- Curragh officers resign rather than risk marching against Ulster, 121-123, 130, 133, 136
- Curtis, Lionel, 355
- Curzon, Lord, of Kedleston, 104, 186; member of War Cabinet, 245
- Daily Chronicle*, *The*, 117, 127, 297
- Daily Herald*, *The*, published daily, April 1912, 82
- Daily Mail*, *The*, 24, 153; gives £10,000 prize for first Atlantic flight, 342
- Daily News*, *The*, 127
- Daily Telegraph*, *The*, 16, 127
- D'Annunzio, Gabriello, organizes military expedition and annexes Fiume, 347
- Dardanelles, 173, 179, 185, 194; paralysed into trench warfare, 195, 200, 204
- "Dartmoor shepherd," the, 30
- Daylight Saving Bill, 229
- Declaration of London, 37
- Beeley, Mallaby, M.P., buys Covent Garden site from Duke of Bedford, 125; buys up standard suits which had been prepared for demobilization, 358
- Defeated countries, belated concern for condition of, 323; U.S.A., through Mr Hoover, organizes marvellous relief, 325
- Defence of the Realm Act, 202, 204, 217, 327, 332
- Delhi, seat of government moved there, by Royal proclamation, from Calcutta, 57
- Demobilization, plans for careful and gradual, fail, 318; many difficulties at bases in France, 322; centres working off men, 50,000 a day, 322
- Derby, Lord, Director of Recruiting, 199, 240; goes to War Office, 244
- "Derby Scheme," 199, 202, 207, 209, 214, 218
- Deschanel, M., articles on Triple Entente by, 26
- Devonport, Lord, unconciliatory in Transport Strike, 81; first Food Controller, 239; warnings issued, 254; resigns, no sympathy with the people who were suffering from high prices, 264
- Dew, Inspector, 16, 17
- Dacey, Professor, signs "British Covenant," 129
- "Diehards," 88
- Dilke, Sir Charles, dies, 31; his career, 32
- Dillon, John, 137
- "Dilly" and "Dally," 332
- "Direct Action," 65, 82, 112, 118, 326
- Director of Food Economy, 267
- Director of Information, 268
- Director of Recruiting, 272
- Domestic servants organized to oppose Insurance Bill, 84
- Donaumont, Fort, 212, 218
- Donington Hall, 179
- Dons working in various ways for all the public services, 206
- Dover, 145, 322
- Drocourt-Quéant front carried by Canadians, August 1918, 306
- Dublin, fighting and destruction of buildings in the streets of, during the rebellion, followed by executions of the leaders, 215-217
- Duckham, Sir Arthur, 344
- "Dug-outs," 261, 331
- EARL'S COURT, licence threatened, 55; prize-fight there abandoned, 55
- Economic Conference of the Allies held in Paris, 237
- Economy, outcry for, 340-347

- Education Bill, 11; estimates under Mr H. A. L. Fisher's Bill (1917) advanced by £4,000,000, 259; Bill passed, 286
- Educational work among the troops, 321
- Edward VII., death of, 15, 136
- Edwards, Enoch, Labour leader, 82
- Effect, what, on the millions of men who had been through the war? 326
- Einstein, Professor, 351
- Electoral Reform, conference on, 257
- Elibank, Master of, Chief Liberal Whip, 72, 100, 101
- Emden*, 166
- Entertainments' Tax, 259
- Erzerum, fall of, 213
- "Escalator," moving staircase at Earl's Court, 74
- Étaples, riot at, 279
- Ewart, Sir J. S., Adjutant-General, 123, 125
- Excess Profits Duty, 259, 357
- FACTORY and workshop inspection widened out in the stress of war work into the making of improved conditions, 256-257
- Fairbanks, Douglas, 359
- Faisal, Emir, 320
- Feltham, 17
- Fisher, H. A. L., 182; at Board of Education, 257; introduces Bill of wide educational prospects, 258
- Fisher, Lord, 162, 167, 185, 217, 347; his book on the war published too soon, 349
- Fisher, Mr, Australia, demands that the Dominions be no longer represented by the Colonial Secretary, 37
- Flour mills, control of, 264
- Foch, Marshal, takes supreme command of Allied armies, 290; deep conviction in the army that he was sure of himself, 302; on the verge of his stroke, 302; on 18th July 1918 he strikes, 303, 308; in London, 319
- Food Control disbanded end of 1919, 358
- Food Controller. See Devonport, Lord; Rhondda, Lord; Clynes
- Food Prices Committee, 313
- Food question, feelings violent on, summer, 1919, 343
- Food Supplies Committee, 226; Lord Selborne, chairman, 240
- Forward*, 209
- Foundations*, theological essays, 114
- Fowler, Sir Henry, dies, 31
- Fox, Sir Francis, report on St Paul's, 104
- France, Anatole, 117
- France: at war, 142; Anglo-French friendship, 142; retreat across France, 153; French Government moves to Bordeaux, 153; a brief daily *communiqué* from French Headquarters, 157; magnificent stand against German attack on Verdun, 211-213; the long struggle wears itself out and the Germans never break through, 227; desperate German rush on Soissons and Aisne fronts, 302; French counter-attack on Château Thierry salient, 303; a cry of triumph, "*On les aura*," 303; anxious post-war relations with, 306
- Franchise Bill passed, giving women the vote, 286
- Franz Ferdinand, Archduke, murdered, 137, 138
- Free Trade, 11, 116
- Freeman's Journal, The*, 134
- French, General (afterwards Lord Ypres), 123, 125, 155, 158; Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 296; arrests and deports Sinn Feiners, 296; his book on the war, 1914, 349
- Friends, Society of, 241; many working in France, 241, 253
- GALLIPOLI, 179, 180, 182, 189, 202
- Galsworthy, John, 17
- Galton, Sir Francis, dies, 30
- Gandhi, 352

Geddes, Sir Auckland, Director of Recruiting, becomes Director of National Service, 272; National Service combined with Ministry of Reconstruction, 323

Geddes, Sir Eric, Director of Military Transport, then First Lord of the Admiralty, 272; in 1919 Cabinet, Minister without Portfolio, 323, 336; "the Geddes axe," 364

General Election, the second in 1910, 25, 26

George V., King, receives Mr Asquith on Dissolution, 25; signs denial of former marriage, 33; coronation, 34-36; visits India with the Queen, 36, 57; returns to London, 77; great interest in housing question, visiting industrial centres, 78; another tour in the country, 104; visit to Berlin, 105; Irish affairs interrupt his plans, 136; orders no intoxicants to be served in Royal palaces during the war, 176; goes to France after March disaster, 291; popular acclamations at the Armistice, 311; knights four Atlantic aviators, 342

George, Lloyd, 15, 26; attacked concerning Birkbeck Bank finances, 30; speech at Mansion House on Agadir, 43, 48; commits Cabinet dangerously, 49; his importance to his party, 49; working for Insurance Bill, 61; prominent in Welsh Dis-establishment, 84; opponents to Insurance Bill still militant, 85; steers it past dangers to working, 92; entitled to praise on its success, 93; Marconi affair, 101; says disunion between Liberals and Labour dangerous to his party, 180; in touch with trade unions *re* war work, 175; Minister of Munitions, 187; pacifies South Wales miners, 196; member of "War" Cabinet, 201; fails with Clyde workmen, 209; agitates against Mr Asquith, who resigns, 242; becomes

George, Lloyd—*continued*

Premier, 244; his personality forces command of public opinion, 246; plot to murder him, 246; sets committees in different areas to inquire into vexed questions, 265; Imperial War Cabinet enables him to call upon the services of Colonial leaders like General Smuts, 268; man-power question, 272; devises Irish scheme to suppress Sinn Féin, 286; reception of news of March disaster on Western Front, 289; evades Sir Frederick Maurice's accusations, 297; announces 300,000 American troops in France, 302; urges need for Coalition Government to remain in power, 16th November 1918, 314; prepares for "coupon" election, 315; failure of the statesmen in the critical situation after the Armistice, 314-317; talks of "Prussianism" in the industrial world, 327; time divided between the House and Versailles, 333; has to face indemnity outcry, 338; signs Treaty of Versailles, 341; announces that a tribunal to try the Kaiser would sit in London, 341; even his personal power fails to concentrate interest on the Treaty, 342; states nationalisation of mines definitely rejected, 345; issues instructions to economise in every department, 346; receives £2000 a year from Mr Andrew Carnegie, 346; introduces Lady Astor to the House, 352; national affairs difficult to manage, 359; beginning of the end of Coalition, 365; strain of signing Free State Treaty, 365; anxious post-war relations with France about Turkey, 366; resigns, October 1922, 366; tribute to his holding of the nation in war, 366

German Emperor, the, and the Empress at the coronation of

German Emperor—*continued*

George V., 34; visits Krupp's munition works, 79; his only daughter marries Prince Ernest Augustus of Cumberland, 105, 152, 201, 203, 211; abdicates and takes refuge in Holland, 309, 324

German War memoirs by Ludendorff, Tirpitz and Falkenhayn widely read, 349; showing the war, for first time, from the other side, 349

Germany: comment on French articles about Triple Entente, 26; little sign of friendliness for, in England, 27; two Englishmen condemned as spies in, 27; gun-boat *Panther* at Agadir, 43; territorial compensation with France, 48; in advance in national efficiency, 50; communications with Ulster, 132; waiting for "der Tag," 140; declares war on Russia, 141; crosses the French and Luxemburg frontiers, 141; violates neutrality of Belgium, 141; Sir E. Grey asks for undertaking to respect Belgium—reply open till midnight, 4th August, 142; French and English retreat from Mons, 153; *communiqués* fairly ample, 157; Army Order naming B.E.F. "contemptible little army," 158; first use of poison gas, 180; sinking of the *Lusitania*, 181, 183; Bulgaria comes into war on her side, 197; Germans, Austrians and Bulgarians sweep over Serbia, 197; Miss Cavell shot, 198; "King Tino" and the Kaiser, 201; tremendous advance on Verdun, 211-213; issues notice to neutrals of unrestricted submarine warfare in a "barred" zone, 247; retreats to Hindenburg Line, 251; daylight air-raids, 266; troops pouring to West Front, freed from Russian fighting, 271; attack on 21st March 1918, which breaks Western Front for nearly fifty miles,

Germany—*continued*

290; another successful attack, 291; Captain von Riehlthofen killed and is buried behind English lines with honours, 293; correspondence with Ireland, 296; attack on French Front, 302; Ludendorff, makes one more attack, 303; English and French counter-attacks successful, 303; Drocourt-Quéant front carried by Canadians, and Hindenburg Line crumbles, 306; tens of thousands of prisoners taken, 307; the Armistice, 308; revolution breaks out in, 309; Kaiser abdicates, and takes refuge in Holland, 309; Soldiers' and Workmen's Committees, 324; leaders of the Spartacists, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, killed in Berlin, 324; delegates at Versailles take back Peace terms to Reichstag to debate, 340; accepted, 340; German fleet scuttled at Scapa Flow, 340; Treaty of Versailles signed, 341; its currency, 362

Gilbert, Sir W. S., drowned, 43, 76

Girl Guides, 103

Gladstone, W. E., 10, 31, 32

Globe, *The*, suspended, 202

Goeben, cruiser, 166

Gore, Bishop, 115

Gorst, Sir John, 22

Gosling, Mr, 66

Goudy, Professor, signs "British Covenant," 129

Gough, Brigadier-General (Sir Hubert), 122, 123; German surprise and break-through on his Front, 289; relieved of his command, 289, 297-298

Government (1919) difficulties with post-war conditions, 330-332

Government enterprises wound up, 362

Gramophone, early developments, 73

Graphic, *The*, 127

Great Eastern Railway, an American made General Superintendent, 116

- Great Illusion, The*, 27  
 "Great Lafayette, The," burned on the stage in Edinburgh, 35  
 Gretna, a town of munitions, 335  
 Grey, Sir Edward (now Lord Grey of Falldon), 25; promises consultation about international agreements in future, 37, 48; announces Austria's rejection of Serbia's ultimatum, 138, 139, 142, 144; a shadow on his reputation regarding the Balkans, 200; resigns at same time as Mr Asquith, 244; speaks on behalf of League of Nations, 350  
 Grey, Lord, 14  
 Grossmith, George, 76  
 Gun-running, 132, 137  
 Guns, captured German, in the Mall, 319  
 HAIG, Sir Douglas (afterwards Lord), 203; generously effaces himself, 290; his message, "no retirement," 292, 308; return to London after the war, 319; at Peace celebrations, 343  
 Haldane, Lord, Lord Chancellor, 80; his reorganisations at War Office well established, 80; visits Berlin, 94; "increasing progress in artillery," 177; "hounded" in public opinion, 179, 186, 217  
 Haldane, Dr J. S., 180  
 Halifax, Lord, signs "British Covenant," 129  
 Halsbury, Lord, 88  
 Hamilton, Sir Ian, 202, 205  
 Harcourt, Lewis, Colonial Office, 24, 83  
 Harcourt, Robert, 76  
 Harrington, Sir Charles, 367  
 Hart, Sir Robert, Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, 57  
 Hawker, Mr, attempts first Atlantic flight, picked up and landed at Thurso, 342  
 Health, Ministry of, Bill, 336  
 Henderson, Arthur, 186; member of War Cabinet, 245; plot to murder, 246; in favour of British members attending Stockholm Congress, 265; re-
- Henderson, Arthur—continued  
 signs from the Cabinet, 266; warns Government of serious industrial situation, 288  
*Henry VIII.*, 17  
 Hicks, Joynson (now Lord Brentford), 210  
 High prices for famous old masters, 103  
 Hill 70, 197  
 Hill, Miss Octavia, 78; "Octavia-Hill Verein," Berlin, 78  
 Hindenburg, 161, 194; comes to Western Front, 257  
 Hindenburg Line, 257, 306, 335  
 Hoche, Lazare, 214  
*Hogue*, H.M.S., 157, 166  
 Home Office Vote, 1913, becomes a debate on militant suffragettes, 131  
 Home Rule, opening of the fight, 61; Bill (1912) gave Ireland a Senate and a House of Commons, 79; militancy on the question, 85; Government defeated on a snap division, 86; third reading, 92; rejected by the Lords, 92; little debated when it came up a second time, 107; exclusion of Ulster not simple, 120; third passage in House, 130; violent discussions regarding Ulster, 133; Amending Bill, 133; third reading, May 1914, 134; Home Rule enrolls 100,000 volunteers, 134; Bill placed on Statute Book but operation suspended till end of war, 156; Irish question again to the fore, 286; Convention to propose a scheme, 286; constant local fighting, 354; full rebellion, 361; finally Irish Free State formed, 365  
 Hope diamond lost in *Titanic*, 70  
 Horne, Sir Robert, Chancellor of the Exchequer, asks for large reductions on Estimates, 364  
 Horse omnibus, last L.G.O.C. ran October 1911, 47  
 "Hounding," 174, 179  
 House of Commons, 10; its composition in December 1910, 26; caps its poor war record by "coupon" election, 314; its

House of Commons—*continued*  
 composition in December 1918,  
 323; except for Irish Unionists  
 hardly an Irish member present,  
 325; first woman member, 351  
 House of Lords, 10, 12, 23, 24;  
 little interest in "veto" final  
 stages outside Westminster, 31;  
 complaints in, of excessive  
 Government expenditure on  
 taking over hotels, town-halls,  
 etc., for war work, 260  
 Housing and Town-Planning Act,  
 77; Bill (1919), 334  
 Housing problem colossal, 334  
 Housing subsidy cut off, 362  
 Hughes, Mr, Prime Minister of  
 Australia, speech-making up and  
 down the country, 237  
 Hunger-strike, 83  
 Hunt, Holman, 19  
 Huts, Army, erected all over the  
 country, 260  
 "Hymn of Hate," 102, 190

*Illustrated London News, The*, 127  
 Imperial Conference, 36  
*In Darkest Africa*, 78  
*In Darkest London*, 78  
 Income Tax, 1916, three to six  
 shillings, 225; 1917, five and six  
 shillings, 259  
 Increment on Land Values,  
 Taxation of, 12  
 India, self-government for, 323;  
 Bill making reforms, 352; long  
 and elaborate report, 352  
 Industrial situation acute, 1912,  
 63-68  
 Industrial Workers of the World,  
 U.S.A., 65  
 Influenza epidemic, grave, in  
 England, 308  
 Inge, Dean, 63  
 Insurance, Health and Unemploy-  
 ment, Bill, 33; in two parts,  
 49; "9d. for 4d." catchword,  
 50; criticism of large Friendly  
 Societies, 51; hostility of  
 society ladies and the medical  
 profession, 52; passed, 53;  
 did not come into force till  
 July 1912, and opposition still  
 active, 60, 83; operates, July

*Insurance—continued*  
 1912, 84; medical benefits in  
 January 1913, 84; steered past  
 last dangers, 92  
 International Socialist Congress,  
 storm in the Commons about  
 Mr Ramsay MacDonald and  
 Mr Jowett attending it, 266  
 Ireland (see also *Ulster*), Home  
 Rule, 61; industrial struggle in  
 Dublin, 111; open republican-  
 ism, 112; Larkin imprisoned,  
 but soon released, 118; serious  
 developments in Irish situation,  
 120; resignations of officers at  
 the Curragh, 121; return to  
 duty, 122; misunderstandings  
 with War Office, 123; General  
 French, General Ewart and  
 Colonel Seely resign, 125; situ-  
 ation more conciliatory, 130;  
 complete exclusion of Ulster  
 demanded, 133; violent scenes  
 over Bill, 133; Sir Roger  
 Casement's landing, 214; re-  
 bellion in Dublin, and public  
 buildings seized, 215; fighting  
 and destruction, 215-216; fol-  
 lowed by many executions, 217;  
 bitter resentment in House  
 of Commons and Mr Birrell  
 resigns, 216; Lloyd George  
 attempts to suppress Sinn Féin,  
 286; Convention gathered to  
 propose yet another Home  
 Rule proposal, 286; constantly  
 recurring attacks on police  
 barracks, 354; murderous at-  
 tack on General French, 354;  
 Federal Council proposed, 354;  
 fresh start, 355; conditions  
 atrocious in summer 1920, 360;  
 R.I.C. reinforced by demobilised  
 men, 360; perpetual ambushes,  
 murders and reprisals, 360;  
 Government engaged in new  
 Home Rule proposals, 361;  
 first half of 1921 a time of full  
 rebellion, 361; in July the  
 idea that England was govern-  
 ing given up, 361; Ministers  
 treat with Sinn Féin as the  
 provisional government of  
 another nation, 364; General  
 Smuts goes to negotiate, 365;

## Insurance—continued

Dominion status proposed by Mr Asquith, 365 ; long struggle over terms, 365 ; Sinn Féin delegates in London, 365 ; holds out for independence, 365 ; the end forced by Ministers threatening full-scale war, 365 ; under formula of loyalty to the King and British Commonwealth of Nation, the Free State comes into being, 365

Irish Rebellion after Sir Roger Casement's landing, April 1916, 214-217

Isaacs, Sir Rufus (now Lord Reading), Attorney-General, 24 ; in Marconi affair, 99-101 ; becomes Lord Chief Justice, 101

Italy attacks Tripoli, 47 ; enters the war, 188, 271

JAMES, Henry, O.M., 131, 212

James, William, Professor, 19

Jazz bands, post-war, 339

Jellicoe, Admiral (now Lord), 221 ; his war book published too soon, 349

Jerusalem, surrender of, 281

Johnson, Jack, negro prize-fighter, 55

Jowett, William (now Sir), 51, 265

*Justice*, 17

Jutland, battle of, 220-221, 284

KARL, Emperor of Austria, abdicates, 324

Kemmel, Mont, 292

Kerensky, 270

"Key industries," 345

Khartoum, 77

Kimmell Park, riot at, 322

Kikuyu controversy, 114, 116

King, Joseph, 286

"King Tino," 201

Kipling, Rudyard, 206, 321

*Kismet*, 86

Kitchener of Khartoum, Earl, 77 ; in England when war broke out, and appointed Secretary for War, 145 ; appeals for 100,000 men, 149 ; appeals to the strikers on the Clyde, 174 ; first cloud on

## Kitchener—continued

his popularity, 177 ; success of his new armies, 197 ; goes to Near East to review situation, 202 ; drowned off Orkneys on voyage to Russia, 221 ; legends about him, showing his hold on the people's imagination, 222, 244, 349

Knox, Father Ronald, 114

*Königsberg*, cruiser, 166

Kut-el-Amara, 213 ; falls, 219

LABOUCHERE, Henry, career and death, 59

Labour, Ministry of, founding of, 245

Labour Party, 21, 22, 47 ; leaders unconciliatory after Osborne case, 81 ; the party felt it had little effectiveness, 82 ; association with Liberals wearing thin, 82 ; unrest in industrial questions, 117 ; party hostile on Rand disturbances, 119 ; critical in Ulster crisis, 124 ; sore over Larkin and South Africa, 130 ; Arthur Henderson first Labour member of a Cabinet, 186 ; conference with Trade Union Congress, 265 ; revision of its constitution, 287 ; resolution to establish a Labour Party in every constituency, 287 ; development hastened by the war, 288 ; announces itself as the official opposition in 1919 Parliament, 325

Labour, restless under war control, but did not dissociate itself from the war, 266 ; resents conscription, dilution and rationing, 288 ; convinced to end of war that pressure was due to profiteering, not real shortage, 289

*La Gioconda* stolen from the Louvre, 46

Land Settlement Bill, 334

Land, the, vivified by Government interest, falls back into apathy upon decontrol, 363

Land valuation, 345

Lansbury, George, 51, 83



- Lansdowne, Lord, 11 (note), 15, 24; produces scheme for reform of House of Lords, 33, 38, 39, 137, 186; his Peace Letter, 274; after its rejection he takes no further place in public life, 275
- Larkin, James, founds Irish Transport Workers' Union, 111; campaign in Dublin of "direct action," 112; imprisoned and released, 113, 216
- Law, Bonar, leader Conservative party, 55, 108, 109, 119, 122, 124, 133, 137, 178, 186, 201; becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer, 244; leader in the House, 245, 268, 314; Coalition Manifesto, 317, 363
- Lawn tennis, French victories in, 46
- Lawrence, Colonel, his amazing influence with the Arabs, 320; his assistance to Lord Allenby, 321; his personal elusiveness fosters romantic rumours, 320-321
- League of Nations Union launched on first anniversary of Armistice, 350
- Lec, Lord, of Farcham, 359
- Lec, Sir Sidney, 77
- Lenin, 270
- Letters to Julia*, 70
- Liberator*, *The*, publishes rumours of the King's former marriage, 34
- Licensing Bill, 11
- Life of King Edward* in *D.N.B.*, 77
- Lille, 161
- Live cattle, maximum prices for, 264
- Loan, first War, £350,000,000, 167; second, no specific sum asked for, 193; third, produced £1,000,000,000, 247; "Victory" raised £250,000,000, 345
- London County Council, 77
- London County Hall foundation stone laid by the King, 77
- Long, Walter (afterwards Lord), 54, 119, 186, 192, 218
- Lorraine, Robert, flew to Ireland, 1910, 15
- Lord Ypres, his book, 1914, 349
- "Lords' Veto" principal subject of General Election, December 1910, 26
- Loreburn, Lord, resigned, 80
- Ludendorff, General, 302, 349
- Lusitania*, 171, 181, 183, 190
- Lutsk, 219
- Lympne, 359
- Lyoff, Prince, 252
- Lyttelton, Alfred, 109, 110
- Lyttelton, Dr, headmaster of Eton, resigns, 174
- MACDONALD, RAMSAY, 265
- Mackensen, 182, 190, 194, 197
- Mackenzie, Compton, 205
- Mackenzie - Grieve, Commander, attempts first Atlantic flight, 342
- Maclay, Sir Joseph, shipping controller, 245
- Magistrates, appointment of, Lord Loreburn's committees for, 80
- Manchester Guardian*, *The*, 127
- Mann, Tom, imprisoned for article in *Syndicalist*, 82
- Manoel, ex-King of Portugal, arrives in England, 23
- Man-Power Bill, 291, 296
- Man - Power Distribution Board, 242
- Marconi, 101
- Marconi Company scandal, 99-101
- Marriage*, 76
- Mary, Queen, coronation of, 36; goes to India with the King, 36, 57; returns to London, 77; interest in housing question, 79; visit to Berlin, 105; Relief Fund started by, 150; "Star and Garter" presented to her as home for disabled soldiers, 250; popularity at Armistice, 311
- Masefield, John, 76, 205
- Masterman, Right Hon. C. F. G., stands for re-election, 31
- Maurice, Sir Frederick, Director of Military Operations, writes serious allegations in *Daily Chronicle*, 297; placed on retired pay as consequence, 298; Government never gave a definite reply, 298

- McKenna, Reginald, Home Secretary, 48, 83, 97, 131, 132; Chancellor of the Exchequer and member of War Cabinet, 201
- Mens in restaurants restricted, 280, 255, 282
- Meatless days, 226
- Medical service in war beyond *praise*, 250; *no serious outbreak* of enteric in spite of conditions, 250
- Mesopotamia, 213
- Messines Ridge, 271, 292, 307
- Middle-Class Union, 348
- Midsummer's Night's Dream*, 75
- Militant years, 10
- Milner, Lord, signs "British Covenant," 129; member of War Cabinet, 245, 343
- Miners, demands after the war, 328; Government has to come to temporary terms and proposes Royal Commission, 329; report must be prompt, 329; on fixed date three separate reports, 330; later, a fourth, 344; some measure of nationalisation common to all, 344; but the plan rejected, 345
- Miners, Government control of, 250; lifted, 362
- Minimum wage for farm labourers, 255-256; control taken off, 363
- Minimum wage for miners, 67
- Minlo, Lord, Viceroy of India, initiates reforms, 352
- Miracle, The*, at Olympia, 58
- Mock trial of John Jasper for murder of Edwin Drood, 117
- Moisant, Mr., American, flew across Channel, 1910, 15
- Monro, Sir Charles, 202
- Montagu, E. S., Under-Secretary for India, 98; Indian reforms of, 352-353
- Montagu, Samuel, & Sons, scandal regarding purchase of silver in India, 98
- Mordkin, 18
- Morley, Lord, Lord President of the Council, 24, 124, 134; resigns on outbreak of war, 143; initiates reforms in Indian Government when Secretary for India, 352
- Morning Leader, The*, 127
- Morrison, Stinie, condemned to death for murder, but reprieved, 29
- Motor-cabs and omnibuses, 73
- Motor-car industry, 71, 73; post-war boom in, 338
- Mottram, R. H., 276 (note)
- Munitions, Ministry of, 192, 193, 244, 260, 261; survives, 1919, as Ministry of Supply, 323; disbanded, late 1919, 358
- Murmansk, English forces at, 330; withdrawn, 348
- Mutiny at Kiel, 309
- Mystery ships, 283
- NATIONAL kitchens, 299
- National Service, Ministry of, 272
- National temper irritable at shortages, 300
- National Union of Railwaymen, 67
- Nationalists, gun-running at Howth, 26th July 1914, 137; enter the war with loyalty, 156
- Naval Estimates, 34, 94, 117, 130, 132, 135
- Neptune*, H.M.S., 34
- Neuve Chapelle, 174, 175, 177, 194
- Newspaper correspondents, 231
- Newton, Lord, 40
- Nicholas, Czar of Russia, 252
- Nicholas, Grand Duke, 252
- Nightingale, Florence, 10
- Non-Combatants Corps, 241
- Northcliffe, Lord, 269; Director of Propaganda, 274
- Northumberland, Duke of, 337
- OATES, Captain, of the Scott expedition, his heroic death, 88
- Oil fuel, naval engineering basing its future on, 135
- Oil, speculation in, 71, 72
- Old Age Pensions, 11, 33, 50, 93
- Old Comrades Associations, 363
- Olympic Games, 103, 117
- Opera-house built by Hammerstein in Kingsway, 126
- Order of the Bath, Chapel of, reopened, 105
- Order of Merit, 212
- Orpen, Sir William, 231

- Osborne case, railway employee brings action against Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, 20; fought up to House of Lords and decided in W. V. Osborne's favour, 20, 33; Bill dealing with the case, 81
- Ouimet, golfer, 104
- "PACIFICUS" articles in *The Times*, 23
- Paget, General Sir Arthur, 122, 123
- Palestine campaign, 280-281
- Pall Mall Gazette*, *The*, 70
- Pankhurst, Mrs., trial of, at Old Bailey, 83; goes to see munition factories in France, 196
- Panther*, German gun-boat, 43
- Paper, scarcity of, 225
- "Paper-bag cookery," 46
- Parliament Bill, regulating relations between the two Houses, 12-15, 18, 24, 31-33; debated and secured, 37-43, 87, 91, 107, 131, 133
- Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 313
- Parsifal* at Covent Garden, 125
- Party dissensions, Unionist and Conservative, 54
- Passchendaele, 271, 278
- Patriotic Fund Corporation, 193
- Paylova, Madame, 18
- Peace celebrations in London, 343
- Peace mood as queer and fretted as many war moods, 330-331
- Peace: secret meetings at Versailles, 333; public irritability at the delay in settlement, 333; terms known in May 1919, 340; signed by the delegates of the Allied Powers and the Germans, 341
- Pearson, Arthur (afterwards Sir), his wonderful work at St Dunstan's, 249
- Peers, creation of, contemplated, 13
- Pégoud, aviator, 106
- Pelissier, H., of "The Follies," 18
- People's Charter, 21
- Period of eighteen months before August 1914 full of turbulence on Irish, Suffrage and Trade questions, 89-91
- Pershing, General, 302; in Peace celebrations, London, 343
- Pethick Lawrence, Mr and Mrs., trial of, at Old Bailey, 83
- Pickford, Mary, 359
- Plural Voting Bill, 11
- Podmore, Frank, spiritualist, drowned, 19
- Police ranks depleted by calling up Reserves, 163
- Police strike for recognition of their Union, 304
- Political libel actions arising from two 1910 elections, 31
- Port of London Authority, 81
- Port Sunlight, 136
- Post-war world totally new, 356
- Postal service of the army, 230
- Poulsen, electrical inventor, 100
- Prince Igor*, 127
- Prince of Wales, Investiture of, at Carnarvon, 36; enters Magdalen College, Oxford, 79; starts Relief War Fund, 150; tour to Canada and U.S.A., 353; his great popularity, 354
- Prisoner of War Camps in Germany, condition of, 191
- Profiteering, country at large convinced (1917) that shortage and high prices are due to, 263-264, 289, 299, 319, 338, 343, 345
- Protection, 11, 65, 85
- Provisional Collection of Taxes Bill, 107
- Prudential Assurance Company subscribes £20,000,000 to War Loan, 247
- Przemysl, 190
- Punch*, 27, 63, 75, 203, 274, 312 (note), 340, 358
- Queen Elizabeth*, 173
- RAILWAY fares raised 50 per cent., January 1917, 246; 25 per cent. more, 1920, 357
- Railways, Government control of, 143; taken off, 362
- Rand, trouble on, 119
- Rations, bread and meat to hotels, 255; order concerning cakes and pastry, 255; general, come into force, 282; still continue in July 1919, 348; decontrolled, 362

- Ray, 104
- Reciprocity Treaty between Canada and U.S., 37
- Reconstruction, Ministry of, 208 ; Ministry of National Service combined with, after the war, 323
- Red Cross, 165
- Redmond, John, appeal to, by Sir Edward Carson, 130, 132, 134, 137, 186 ; his death, 287
- Reform Bill of 1832, 13
- Refugees, Belgian, 151, 160, 163, 167
- Refugees, Serbian, go mostly to *Corsica*, 200
- Registration Act, 198, 196, 199, 218
- Reinhardt, 35, 58
- Relativity Theory, 351
- Rent Restriction Bill, 333
- Representation of the People Bill, simplifying the franchise and including women, 257
- Republic proclaimed in Lisbon, 22
- Reuter, Admiral von, 340
- Review of Reviews*, *The*, 70
- Rhodes Scholarships, 117
- Rhonda, Lord, becomes Food Controller, 264 ; his changes, 264 ; first approach to real rationing, 267 ; resigns, 298
- Richborough, 335
- Richthofen, Captain von, most famous German airman, killed, and buried with full honours behind British lines, 203
- Riots, demobilisation, 322
- Roberts, Lord, 102, 103
- Robertson, Sir William, resigns, 291
- Roller-skating craze, 1911, 45 ; passes in 1912, 78
- Rolls, Hon. C. S., killed while flying, 15
- Rothermere, Lord, first Minister for Air, 269
- Royal Commission on Divorce, Report of, 76
- Rubber, speculation in, 71 ; "synthetic," 71
- Russell, Lord John, 59
- Russian army, 161, 188, 189 ; steady defeat of, 194 ; takes Russian army—*continued*  
   Erzerum from Turks, 213 ; hopes early in war soon crumble, 252 ; Czar takes over command, 252 ; White and Red, after the Revolution, 329-330
- Russian ballet, 18
- Russian Revolution, 251-252
- "Russian steam-roller," 194
- SACKVILLE, Lady Margaret, 316
- St John, Florence, 75
- Saint-Mihiel salient, 307
- St Paul's Cathedral, its alarming condition, 104
- Saint-Quentin, 307
- Salisbury, Lord, 218
- Salonica, 198, 201
- Salvation Army emerges from obloquy, 78
- Samuel, Herbert, Postmaster-General, in Marconi affair, 99-101
- Samuel, Sir Stuart, M.P., 99
- Sankey, Mr Justice, chairman of Mines Commission, 329 ; three separate reports, 336 ; in May 1919 there were four, 344 ; he alone in favour of immediate nationalisation, 344
- Sarajevo, 137, 188, 140
- Sargent, John, portrait of Henry James damaged by suffragettes, 181
- Sassoon, Sir Philip, 359
- Sassoon, Siegfried, 279
- "Save the Children Fund," 325
- Scapa Flow, 284, 340
- "Scientific burglary," first case of, 17
- Scientific knowledge, advance of, 70
- Scott, Sir Percy, commands air defence of London, 210
- Scott, Captain R. F., 68 ; public appalled by news of his death and that of his companions, 88, 89
- Scottish Land Bill, 11
- Sea-fighting goes in unexpected ways and stimulates unforeseen heroism, 283
- Seamen's and Firemen's Union, 265

- "Secret Diplomacy," first protest against, 48
- Seely, Colonel, Minister for War, on progress in aviation, 106; in Ulster crisis, 123-125
- Selborne, Lord, Chairman of Food Supplies Committee, 240
- Serbia, 197, 198; "wiped out," 200
- Shackleton, D. J., Labour adviser to Home Office, 66
- Shells, 950,000 fired on the day the Hindenburg Line was broken, costing nearly £4,000,000, 335
- Shipping Controller, 244; Sir Joseph Maclay, 245, 261; his department disbanded late 1919, 358
- Shop stewards, 254, 258, 301
- Simon, Sir John, Solicitor-General, 24
- Sinha, Sir S. P., Under-Secretary for India, 1919, first native of India to join a British Government, 323; becomes a peer, 323
- Sinn Féin, 216, 286; Nationalist seats go solidly for, in 1919 Parliament, 325; hold a Convention in Dublin instead of coming to House of Commons, 325
- Skellington, Sheehy, 217
- Sketch, The*, 127
- Smillie, Mr, miners' leader, 337
- Smith, F. E. (now Lord Birkenhead), 17, 22, 80; in Ulster, 85, 117; made Press censor on outbreak of war, 149; becomes Lord Chancellor, 1919, and created Lord Birkenhead, 323
- Smuts, General, 268; in police strike, 304, 365
- Snowden, Philip, 51
- Society, Royal, expels aliens from membership, 300
- Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association, 193
- Soldiers' and Workmen's Committees in Berlin, 309
- Somme, battle of the, 227; terrible casualties in, 228, 234, 290
- Special Constabulary, 163, 304
- Spencer, Lord, the Red Earl, dies, 18
- Spring, 1919, shows signs of social and mental recovery from the war, 338
- Spy scares, 149, 161-162, 167, 182, 300-301
- "Stamp-licking," 52
- Stanley, Sir Albert, at Board of Trade, 245; averts railway strike, 264
- Stanley, H. M., 78
- "Standard bread," 46
- "Star and Garter" bought, rebuilt and presented to the Queen as a home for hopelessly disabled soldiers, 250
- Stead, W. T., sank in *Titanic*, 70; his important journalism, 70
- Steel-Maitland, Mr, unites Unionists and Conservatives, 85
- Stepney Borough Council on aliens, 300
- Stewart-Richardson, Lady Constance, 18
- Stockholm, 265-266
- Strikes: unauthorised by trade unions, 9; shipbuilding lock-out, 22; cotton lock-out, 22; South Wales coal, 22; epidemic of, 34; further outbreak of, with violence, at various centres, 44; general railway strike lasts two days, 45; settlement unsatisfactory, 46; labour disaffection, 50; 1,000,000 men out, 67; transport workers, 80; engineers on the Clyde, 1915, 174; at South Wales coal-field, 196; engineers' strike at Barrow, 254; ends in nominal concession, 254; engineers disaffected, arrests made, 264; railway strike averted, 264; huge strike threatened if "comb-out" did not take "dilation" first, 288; extensive strikes at Coventry, Manchester, Birmingham, Lincoln, 301; Government's drastic action, 301; disheartening epidemic of, women employees, miners, police, 304; in September 1918, cotton-workers, railwaymen, shipwrights, 305; disturbing results of war strikes, 326; strikes among shipwrights and engineers and gas and

## Strikes—continued

electricity workers, 327; coal-miners' unrest, 327-329, 348; railway, September 1910, 348; anger of miners at decontrol ends in a strike, 363; subsidy of £10,000,000 granted, 363

Studdert-Kennedy, Rev. G. A. ("Woodbine Willie"), 263

Submarines, swift development of, under stress of war, in two years, 247; able to take long voyages, 248; the "campaign" becomes the "menace," with heavy losses of English shipping every week, 254; weekly total decreased but still serious, 263; announced that menace now "held," 283

Suez Canal, 173, 189

Sugar, limited for cakes and pastry, 255; supplies put on a new system, 267

Sullivan, Sir Arthur, 43

Summer of 1910, in, people did not grasp the fact that pre-war prices would not return, 343

*Sumurun*, 35

Sun Yat Sen, first President of Chinese Republic, 58

Supplementary Bill to Women's Franchise, enabling them to sit in the House, 351

Supply, Ministry of. See Munitions

Surplus stores, sale of, 358

Suspension of members, standing order for, never completed, 42

Suvla Bay, 195

*Syndicalist, The*, 82

Syndicalists, France, 65

System of warning in air raids, 266-267

TABARD STREET area rebuilt, 78

Taff Vale case, 20

Talbot House, Poperinghe, 268

Tanks, first used September 1916, 235; secret perfectly kept, 235; tested in desolate parts of Norfolk, 236

Tariff Reform, 65, 85, 108, 116

*Tailor, The*, 127

Taxation of unearned increment, 345

*Ten Years After*, 276 (note)

Thorne, Will, 51

Tillett, Ben, 81, 82

*Times, The*, 23, 115, 122; sold at a penny, 127, 140; published "The March of the Huns," 152; started a fund for motor-ambulances, 156; text of Kaiser's Army Order, "contemptible little army," 157; frank criticism, 178, 187, 291

*Titanic*, the, sunk 15th April 1912, 1035 persons drowned, 69-71, 88; "Toc H," 263

Tolstoy dies at railway station, 19

Tonypandy, 22

Tottenham affair, 29

Townshend, General, besieged in Kut-el-Amara, 218; it falls, and he and his men are prisoners, 219

Trade Disputes Act, 11

Trade Union Bill, 38

Trade Union Congress, 22, 66, 120, 265, 348

Trade Union Funds, 20, 21

Trade Union recognition, 66

Trade unions, vigorous, 61, 190; leaders support Lloyd George, 245; resentment at compulsory service, 254; leaders thrown out in 1918 strikes, 301

Transport, Ministry of, Bill, 336

Transport Workers' Federation, 80

Trec, Sir Herbert, 17

Trenchard, Sir Hugh, Chief of Air Staff, debate in Commons on his resignation, 297-298

Trentino, 219

Tribunals, 218, 240, 241, 242, 253

"Triple Alliance" of unions of railway and transport workers and miners, 118

Trotsky, 270

Tweedmouth, Lord, 94

ULSTER: arming for rebellion (1912), 61; march past of 80,000 men pledged against Home Rule, 83; signing of the Ulster Covenant, 85; "General Carson" and "Galloper Smith," 85; anxiety on the situation, 85; should Sir Edward Carson

Ulster—*continued*

be arrested ? 110 ; large forces being drilled, 111 ; public attention concentrates on, 119 ; serious developments, 120 ; gun-running, 132 ; warning from Protestant Germany that they would not go as far as fighting, 133 ; violent discussion in House, 133 ; whole question "hung up" by possibility of war, 139

Union of General Railway Workers, 45

Union of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, 44, 66

VALERA, Eamonn de, 216, 286, 296, 364-365

Vardon, 104

Vegetable-growing, 226

Venizelos, 201

*Venus*, by Velazquez, damaged, 131

Verdun, terrible assault, 211-213, 219, 227

Victoria, Queen, Memorial, 34, 104

Vimy Ridge, battle of, epic day of the Canadians, 251

*Vindictive*, 292

Visitors to the battle area, 231

Von Lettow-Vorbeck, General, 268

WALLACE, Alfred Russel, 115 (note)

War: "We were at War," 4th August 1914, 143 ; railways taken over by Government, 143 ; White Paper issued on 5th, showing Sir Edward Grey's efforts for peace, 145 ; Kitchenier appointed to War Office, 145 ; paper currency issued, 147 ; Food Prices Committee set up, 148 ; control taken of "news," 148 ; Press censorship under F. E. Smith, 149 ; first vote of credit for £100,000,000, 149 ; "Business as usual," 150 ; Relief Fund started by Queen and Prince of Wales, 150 ; H.M.S. *Amphion* lost, 151 ; Namur falls, 151 ; French and

War—*continued*

British forces in retreat across France, 153 ; widespread and general belief in the rumour of Russian troops in England, 154 ; found to arise from troop trains bearing Highland regiments, 155 ; battles of the Marne and Aisne, 155 ; General French's despatches hearten the public by showing retreat from Mons orderly and unbroken, 155 ; "Eyewitness's" reports, 157 ; loss of *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy*, 157 ; "the angels of Mons," 158 ; Mr Churchill's attempt to relieve Antwerp with two naval brigades fails, 160 ; "the fight for the road to Calais," 161 ; new scare about "concrete beds," 161 ; not dissipated by reports of artillery experts, 162 ; Prince Louis of Battenberg resigns as First Sea Lord, 162 ; Lord Fisher succeeds him, 162 ; Volunteer Training Corps, 163 ; swift response of Empire in sending troops, 164 ; Ypres, first battle of, 164 ; embittered recruiting pressure, 165 ; Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. work, 165 ; fight in Flanders developing into a sort of siege warfare, 166 ; battle of Coronel, 166 ; *Bulwark* blown up at Sheerness, 166 ; spy scare again, 167 ; first War Loan, £850,000,000, 167 ; battle of Falkland Islands, 167 ; Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool shelled, 170 ; committee appointed to investigate charges of atrocity, 170 ; first Zeppelin raids, 170 ; Germans stiffen up their submarine warfare, 170 ; modified by protests from U.S.A., 170 ; Admiral Beatty captures the *Blucher*, 171 ; food prices begin to rise, 171 ; loss of the *Formidable*, off Lyme Regis, 171 ;\* institution of new decoration, M.C., 172 ; bombardment of the Dardanelles, 173 ; recruiting pressure, 173 ; Neuve Chapelle terrible

War—*continued*

casualties, 174, 175; outcry on the drink question, 176; secret struggles in Cabinet not known till later, 177; munitions' controversy, 178; German prisoners in England said to be too well treated, 179; divisions in Cabinet about Dardanelles, 179; renewed fighting at Ypres, 180; first poison-gas attack, 180; sinking of the *Lusitania*, 181, 183; mobs attack alien shopkeepers, 182; report of committee on atrocities, 182; fever-pitch which ends first stage of the war, 182; fighting on all Fronts acute, 182; entry of Italy into the war, 183; Coalition Government formed, 186; Ministry of Munitions, 187; National Registration, 192; second War Loan, 193; success on Western Front, new armies engaged, 197; British and French forces land at Salonica, 198; Nurse Cavell shot, 198; only in after years the struggles over the Balkans in the Cabinet known, 200; call for leadership, 201; small War Cabinet of five chosen, 201; plain things said about G.H.Q., 203; Sir John French hands over command to Sir Douglas Haig, 203; discussion on "war-babies," 204; "no treating," 204; whole Dardanelles force successfully withdrawn, 204; Indian troops sent back, 206; opinion comes round to compulsion, 207; Labour's attitude "revolutionary," 209; "compulsion" no more than a supplement to Derby Scheme, 209; appeal for War Savings, 209; popular impatience at raiders' immunity, 210; lighting restrictions stiffened, 211; bad news from Mesopotamia, 213; recruiting a "chaos," 214; rebellion in Ireland, fighting and destruction in Dublin, followed by executions of leaders, 215-217; first secret

War—*continued*

session of Parliament, 217; Compulsory Service Bill, 218; fall of Kut-el-Amara, 219; battle of Julland, 220-221; death of Lord Kitchener, 221-222; entry of women into war tasks, 223; Food Supplies Committee, 226; battle of the Somme, 227; terrible casualty lists, 228; return to trench warfare, 234; tanks first used, 235; Food Controller appointed, 239; attacks on Mr Asquith, who resigns, 243; new Government under Mr Lloyd George, 244; 50 per cent. increase in rail fares, 246; explosion of munition factory in East London, 246; third War Loan, 247; Peace Note from U.S.A., 247; first German submarine menace, 248; German retreat to Hindenburg Line, 251; Russian Revolution, 251-252; U.S.A. enter the war, 252; Bill to enable men, already rejected, to be re-examined, 254; difficult labour conditions, 264; gravest air raids, 266; first approach to real rationing, 267; Ministry of Air set up, 268; final phase of war temper, 270; Russia out of the war, 271; British reinforcements sent to Italy, after Caporetto, 271; two big attacks on Western Front, Messines and Passchendaele, 271; Sir Auckland Geddes on man-power, 272; searching "comb-out," 273; insidious anxiety of the final phase, 273; the fighting machine works very efficiently, but concern about war-weariness, military and civil, 277; heroism, 279; the Palestine campaign, 280-281; scarcity of meat, 282; rationing, 282; House of Commons in secret session for sixth time, 286; shock of March disaster to Fifth Army, 289; by 1st April German advance checked, 290; Allied forces under single command of



War—*continued*

Marshal Foch, 290; Zebrugge raid, 292; Government deals with strikes, 301; anxious news from Western Front, 302; conviction that Foch was sure of himself, 302; 300,000 American troops in France, and others coming, 302; Foch's attack successful, 18th July, 303; deeply anxious and strained weeks, 305; war news startlingly arresting, 306; counter-attack pressing forward steadily, 306; at end of August the Hindenburg Line smashed and carried, 306; victory seems in sight, 307; first completely American battle when they capture the Saint-Mihiel salient, 307; Messines Ridge recaptured, whole German line yielding, 307; Germans ask for safe-conduct to discuss terms for an armistice, 308; fighting to cease on 11th November 1911 at 11 A.M., 310

War buildings and plant put up for sale, 302

War Cabinet, 201; in Lloyd George's Ministry it consisted of Ministers without departments, 244

War Pensions Bill, 192

War Savings Committee, 200

Ward, Sir Joseph, 30

Weetman Pearson firm activities in Mexico and Central America, 72

Wells, Bombardier, prize-fighter, 55, 116

Wells, H. G., 76

Welsh Disestablishment Bill, 79, 84, 86, 91; third reading of, 92; rejected by Lords, 92; comes up a second time, 107; put on Statute Book, but not to operate till after war, 156

Welsh Guards regiment raised, 172

Whitaker, Sir Thomas, 345

Whitley Committee on Industrial Conciliation, Report of, 258; proposes a National Industrial Council through Regional Councils to Shop Councils, 258

*Widows in the Bye Street, The*, 76

Willett, Mr, 229

Willows, Mr, flies dirigible, 15

Wilson, Sir Henry, Chief of Imperial Staff, 291

Wilson, President, in London with Mrs Wilson, 319; stands for the Covenant of the League of Nations and the ideals of international peace, 320

Wireless, 16; life-saving at sea by, 72

Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, 224

Women's Social and Political Union, 74, 113

Women's Suffrage, 9; Conciliation Bill, 19, 25; violent demonstration at Westminster, 25; militancy justified, 53; campaign of window-smashing on abandonment of a Bill, 56; Mr Asquith receives deputation, 56; increasing violence, 56; Government difficulties, 62; militants declare no peace, 63; deadlock, 63; campaign against community at large, 74; Women's Social and Political Union, 74; Bill defeated, 75; threats of further property destruction, 83; Old Bailey trial of Mrs Pankhurst and others, 83; hunger strike at Aylesbury prison, 83; opinion stiffening against, because of outrages, 83; an *impasse*, 95; Franchise and Registration Bill, 95; found unworkable, 96; their war upon society at large, 97; renewed hunger strike, 97; "Cat and Mouse" Act, 97; suffragette killed at the Derby, 98; in 1913 public opinion somewhat more sympathetic, 114; outrages of burning, picture-slashing, etc., break out again, 131, 132; respond to the amnesty on outbreak of war by founding Women's Emergency Corps, etc., 156; Representation of the People Bill passed, 1917, which gave women the vote, 257; parade in a deputation

- Women's Suffrage---*continued*  
to Lloyd George in their many uniforms, 257; Supplementary Bill enabling women to sit as members, 351  
Wood-pulp, embargo on export from Sweden, 1916, 225  
*World Crisis, The: the Aftermath*, 313 (note)  
Wright, Sir Almroth, 74  
Wyndham, Hon. George, 109
- YAPP, Sir Arthur, 267  
*Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay*, sung by George Grossmith, junior, 87  
Y.M.C.A., 165, 191
- Yorkshire Penny Bank, 31  
Younger generation after the war, 359  
Younger, Sir George, 366  
Ypres, 164-165, 180-181, 189, 291, 292, 302-303
- ZEEBRUGGE, brilliant naval raid, 292  
Zeppelins, 105, 161, 170, 191; raids by, constant in early 1916, 210, 211, 220; one brought down near Enfield, 1917, 234; two in Essex, 234; one at Potter's Bar, 234; two at sea, 235  
Zweig, Arnold, 276 (note)



